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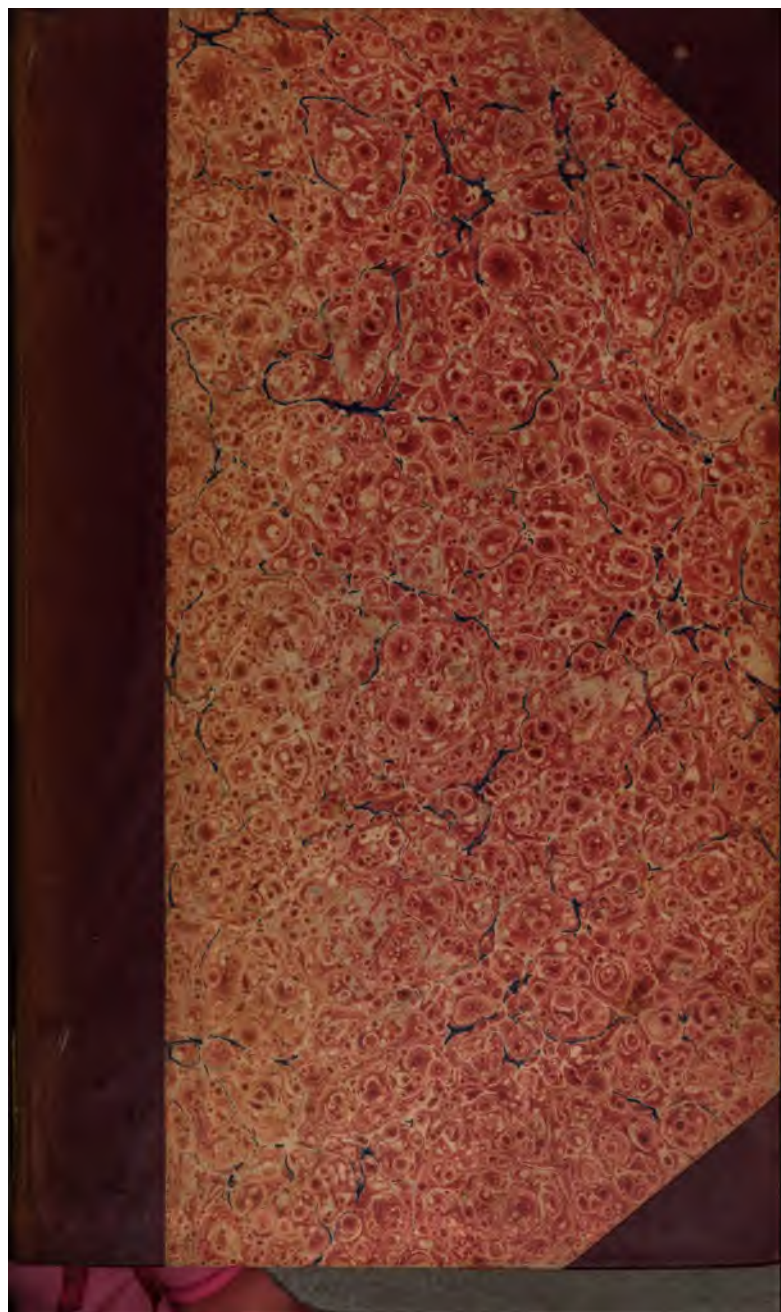
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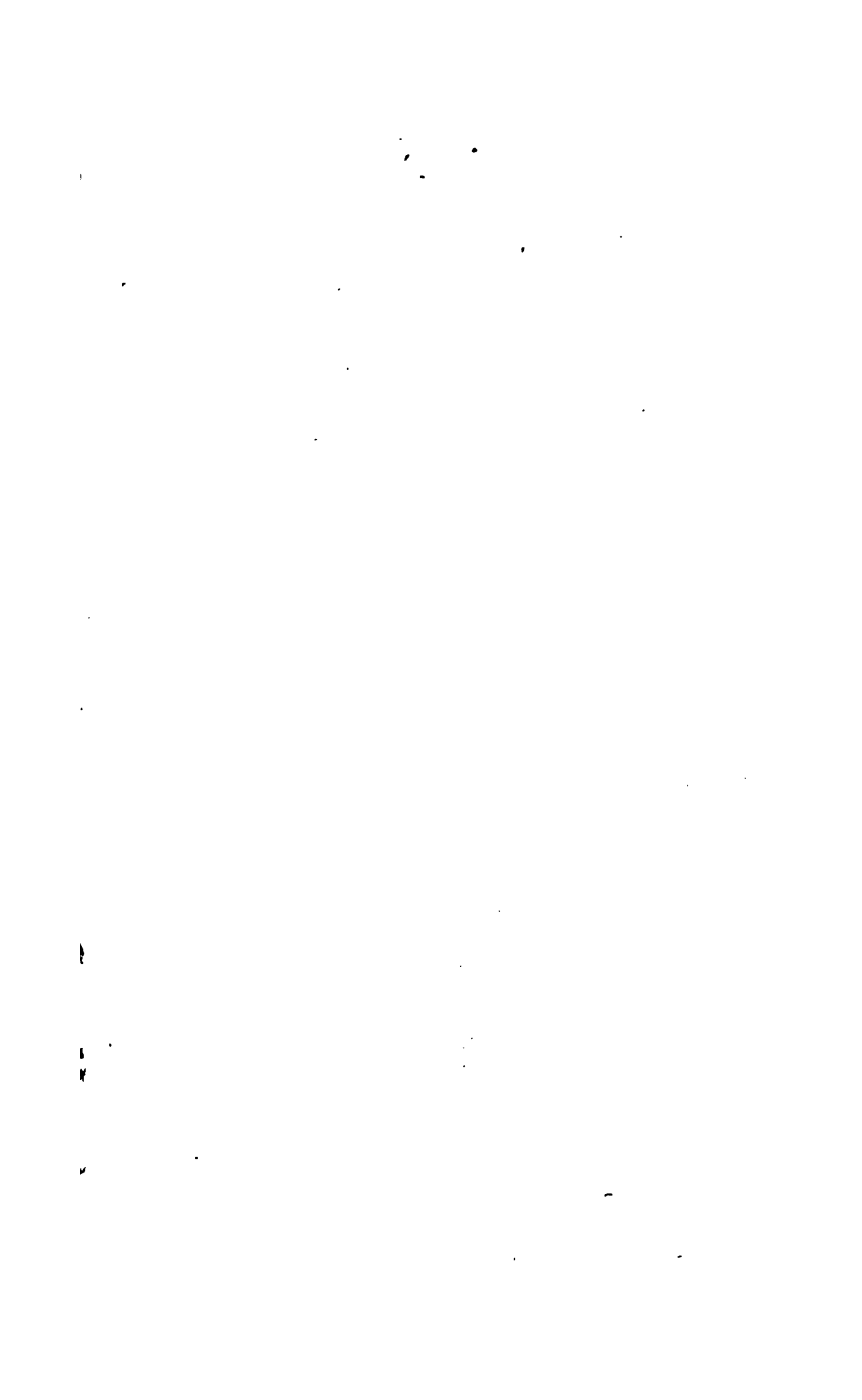
Sir Joseph Radcliffe Bart.

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2 vols.



A
MANUAL
OF
ESSAYS,
SELECTED
FROM
VARIOUS AUTHORS.
IN TWO VOLUMES.

==
VOL. I.
==

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

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1809.



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PREFACE.

THE witty author of *Joseph Andrews* describes the character of Beau Didapper, by negatives, stating the qualities he did *not* possess, before he enumerates his real qualifications. We follow the same example in describing the contents of these little volumes. First, then, they do not form a series of Essays in regular chronological order, nor always in the exact words of the respective writers ; secondly, they do not contain in every case whole pieces, nor do they give any of the Papers published in the great Selection of British Essayists. Having apprised our reader of what he ought *not* to seek, we will next inform him what he may find. In making this Collection it has been our object to place in the hands of the general reader some of those detached but valuable writings which are buried in bulky volumes, or lost in the mass of our fugitive pieces ; to separate from systematic treatises some of those portions which are peculiarly applicable to the purposes of common life, and to select useful and practical Essays from those writers whose entire works cannot safely be trusted in the hands of inexperienced youth ; and thus in a small compass to form an elegant

MANUAL of moral, philosophical, and critical compositions in the popular form of Essays; exempted from the faults of many of the original authors, and without a single passage to shock the most delicate mind. We have never allowed ourselves to add a new idea, though we have occasionally taken the liberty to correct or alter expressions which were either obsolete, vulgar, or incorrect. We refer the reader to the Table of Contents for the entertainment laid before him, and here add a list of the Authors.

Lord Bacon,	Lady M. W. Montagu,
Butler, author of Hudibras,	Lord Lyttleton,
Lord Clarendon,	Spence,
Sir William Temple,	Fielding,
Dryden,	Hume,
Jeremy Collier,	Goldsmith,
Sir Richard Blackmore,	Benj. Franklin,
Locke,	Burke,
Rev. J. Norris, Rector of	Melmoth.
Bemerton,	<i>Also from the</i>
Lord Shaftesbury,	Female Spectator,
Bishop Atterbury,	German Spy,
Pope,	Museum,
Lord Bolingbroke,	Dodsley's Fugitive Pieces.

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ERRATUM.

Vol. I. Page 89, Note †, for Poeta read Vates.

SELECT ESSAYS

FROM

VARIOUS AUTHORS.

ESSAY 1.

OF THE NATURE, RISE, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF

MISCELLANIES.

(*Lord Shaftesbury.*)

PEACE be with the soul of that charitable and courteous author, who for the common benefit of his fellow-authors, introduced the ingenious way of miscellaneous writing!—It must be owned that since this happy method was established, the harvest of wit has been more plentiful, and the labourers more in number than heretofore. It is well known to the able practitioners in the writing art, “That as easy as it is to conceive wit, it is the hardest thing imaginable to be delivered of it, upon certain terms.” Nothing could be more severe or rigid than the conditions formerly prescribed to writers, when criticism took place, and

regularity and order were thought essential in a treatise. The notion of a genuine work, a legitimate and just piece, has certainly been the occasion of great timidity and backwardness among the adventurers in wit; and the imposition of such strict laws and rules of composition, has set heavy on the free spirits and forward geniuses of mankind. It was a yoke, it seems, which our forefathers bore; but which, for our parts, we have generously thrown off. In effect, the invidious distinction of legitimacy and illegitimacy being at length removed; the natural and lawful issue of the brain comes with like advantage into the world; and wit (mere wit) is well received; without examination of the kind, or censure of the form.

This the miscellaneous manner of writing, it must be owned, has happily effected. It has rendered almost every soil productive. It has disclosed those various seeds of wit, which lay suppressed in many a bosom; and has reared numberless conceits and curious fancies, which the natural rudeness and asperity of their native soil would have withheld, or at least not have permitted to rise above the ground. From every field, from every hedge or hillock, we now gather as delicious fruits and fragrant flowers, as of old from the richest and best cultivated gardens. Miserable were those ancient planters, who understanding not how to conform themselves to the rude taste of unpolished mankind, made it so difficult a task

to serve the world with intellectual entertainments, and furnish out the repasts of literature and science.

There was certainly a time when the name of Author stood for something considerable in the world. To succeed happily in such a labour as that of writing a treatise, or a poem, was taken as a sure mark of understanding and good sense. The task was painful; but, it seems, was honourable. How the case happened, in process of time, to be so much reversed, is hard to say. The primitive authors perhaps being few in number, and highly respected for their art, fell under the weight of envy. Being sensible of their misfortune in this respect, and being probably excited by the example of some popular genius, they quitted their regular schemes and accurate forms of workmanship, in favour of those wits who could not possibly be received as Authors upon such difficult terms. It was necessary, it seems, that the bottom of wit should be enlarged; it was advisable that more hands should be taken into the work. And nothing could better serve this popular purpose, than the way of Miscellany, or common essay; in which the most confused head, if fraught with a little invention, and provided with common-place-book learning, might exert itself to as much advantage, as the most orderly and well settled judgment.

To explain the better how this revolution in letters has been effected, it may not perhaps be indecent, should we offer to compare our writing-

artists, to the manufacturers in stuff or silk. For among these it is esteemed a principal piece of skill, to frame a pattern, or plan of workmanship, in which the several colours are agreeably disposed, with such proportionable adjustment of the various figures and devices, as may, in the whole, create a kind of harmony to the eye. According to this method, each piece must be, in reality, an original. For to copy what has gone before, can be of no use. The fraud would easily be perceived. On the other side, to work originally, and in a manner create each time anew, must be a matter of pressing weight, and fitted to the strength and capacity of none besides the choicest workmen.

A manner therefore is invented to confound this simplicity and conformity of design. Patchwork is substituted. Cuttings and shreds of learning, with various fragments, and points of wit, are drawn together, and tacked in any fantastic form. If they chance to cast a lustre, and spread a sort of sprightly glare, the miscellany is approved, and the complex form and texture of the work admired. The eye, which before was to be won by regularity, and had kept true to measure and strict proportion, is by this means pleasingly drawn aside, and amuses itself in gaudy colours, and disfigured shapes of things. Custom, in the mean while, has not only tolerated this licentiousness, but rendered it even commendable, and brought it into the highest repute. The wild and whimsical, under

the name of the odd and pretty, succeed in the room of the graceful and the beautiful. Justness and accuracy of thought are set aside, as too constraining, and of too painful an aspect to be endured in the agreeable and more easy commerce of gallantry, and modern wit.

Now since it has been thought convenient, in these latter ages, to distinguish the provinces of wit and wisdom, and set apart the agreeable from the useful; it is evident there could be nothing devised more suitable to the distinct and separate interest of wit than this complex manner of performance which we call Miscellany. For whatever is capricious and odd, is sure to create diversion to those who look no further; and where there is nothing like nature, there is no room for the troublesome part of thought or contemplation. It is the perfection of certain grotesque painters, to keep as far from nature as possible. To find a likeness in their works, is to find the greatest fault imaginable. A natural connexion is a slur. A coherence, a design, a meaning, is against their purpose, and destroys the very spirit and genius of their workmanship.

I remember formerly when I was a spectator in the French theatre, I found it the custom, at the end of every grave and solemn tragedy, to introduce a comic farce, or miscellany, which they called the little piece. We have indeed a method still more extraordinary upon our own stage. For we

think it agreeable and just to mix the little piece or farce with the main plot or fable, through every act. This perhaps may be the rather chosen, because our tragedy is so much deeper and bloodier than that of the French, and therefore needs more immediate refreshment from the elegant way of drollery, and burlesque-wit, which being thus closely interwoven with its opposite, makes that most accomplished kind of theatrical miscellany, called by our poets a tragi-comedy.

I could go further perhaps, and demonstrate from the writings of many of our grave divines, the speeches of our senators, and other principal models of our national erudition, "That the miscellaneous manner is at present in the highest esteem." But since my chief intention in the following sheets, is to amuse, as well as inform the reader, I presume, that it will not be judged improper or absurd in me, to take advantage of this miscellaneous taste which now evidently prevails.

Nor ought the title of a Miscellaneous Writer to be denied me, on the account that I have grounded my Miscellanies upon a certain set of treatises already published. Grounds and foundations are of no moment in a kind of work, which, according to modern establishment, has properly neither top nor bottom, beginning nor end. Besides, that I shall, like my fellow Miscellanarians, take occasion to vary often my subject, and make what deviations or excursions I shall think fit, as I proceed in my random Essays.

ESSAY 2.

ON TRUTH.

(*Lord Bacon.*)

“WHAT is Truth,” said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for answer. Certainly there are many that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting freewill in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of Philosophers of that kind be gone; yet there remain certain discoursing wits, who are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labour, which men take in finding out truth, nor again, that when it is found, it imposes upon mens’ thoughts, that brings lies in favour; but a natural, though corrupt love of the lie itself. One of the later school of the Grecians examines the matter, and wonders why men should love lies; where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchant, but for the lie’s sake.

But I cannot tell; this same truth is a naked and open day-light, that does not shew the masques,

mummeries, and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that shews best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that shews best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie does ever add pleasure. Does any man doubt, that if there were taken out of mens' minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like; but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves. One of the fathers, in great severity, called poesy, *vinum dæmonum*, the devil's wine, because it fills the imagination, and yet it is but with the shadow of a lie. It is not, however, the lie that passes through the mind, but the lie that sinks in, and settles in it, that does the hurt, such as we spake of before. But howsoever these things are thus in mens' depraved judgments and affections; yet truth, which only judges itself, teaches, that the enquiry of truth, which is the love-making, or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature.

The first creature of God in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last was the light of reason; and his sabbath-work ever since, is the illumination of his spirit. First, he breathed light upon the face of the matter or chaos; then

he breathed light into the face of man : and still he breathes and inspires light into the face of his chosen. The Poet * that beautified the sect † which was otherwise inferior to the rest, says yet excellently well : “ It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tost upon the sea ; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle, and the adventures thereof below : but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth : ” (an hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene :) and to see the errors, and wandrings, and mists, and tempests in the vale below : so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly it is heaven upon earth, to have a man’s mind move in clarity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.

To pass from theological and philosophical truth, to the truth of civil business, it will be acknowledged, even by those that practise it not, that clear and round dealing is the honour of mans’ nature, and that mixture of falshood is like an allay in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but embases it. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goes basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that so covers a man with shame, as to be found false and perfidious ; and therefore Montaigne says prettily, when he en-

* Lucretius.

† Epicuroans.

quired the reason, why the word of *the lie* should be such a disgrace, and such an odious charge: "If it be well weighed, to say that a man lies, is as much as to say, that he is brave towards God, and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man." Surely the wickedness of falsehood, and breach of faith, cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as that it shall be the last peal, to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold, that when Christ comes, he shall not find faith upon the earth.

ESSAY 3.

PATIENCE.

(Lord Clarendon.)

PATIENCE is a Christian virtue, a habit of the mind, that not only bears and suffers contumelies, reproach and oppression, but extracts all the venom, and compounds a cordial out of the ingredients; that preserves the health, and even restores the cheerfulness of the countenance. It is a moral virtue, a temper of mind that controls or resists

all the brutish effects of choler, anger, and rage. And in this regard it works miracles too : it prevents the fatal effects which anger would produce, and diverts the outrages which choler and rage would commit. If it be not sharp-sighted enough to prevent danger, it is composed and resolute enough to resist and repel the assault ; and by keeping all the faculties awake, is very rarely surprised, and quickly discerns any advantages which are offered, because its reason is never disturbed, much less confounded.

Where this blessed temper is the effect of deliberation, and the observation of the folly and madness of sudden passion, it constitutes the greatest perfection of wisdom. But it has in itself so much virtue and advantage, that when it proceeds from the heaviness of the constitution, and from some defect in the faculties, it is not wholly without use and benefit. It may possibly not do so much good as more sprightly and active men use to perform, but then it never does the harm that quick and hasty men are commonly guilty of ; and as fire is much sooner kindled than it is extinguished, we frequently find dull and phlegmatic persons sooner attain to a warmth and maturity of judgment, and to a wonderful discerning of what ought or ought not to be done, than men of quicker and more subtle parts of nature, who seldom bear the labour of thinking. Whereas the other, by continual thinking, repair the defects of nature, and with in-

dustury supply themselves with that which nature refused to give them. All men observe in the litigation of the schools that the calm and undisturbed disputants maintain their point and pursue their end much more efficaciously than their angry and vehement adversaries, whose passions lead them into absurd concessions and undiscerned contradictions. All the ambitious designs for honour and preferment, all the violent pursuits of pleasure and profit, are but disputations and contentions to maintain their theses, to compass that which we have a mind to obtain, and though the boldest men do sometimes possess themselves of the prize, it is but sometimes, and when it is not warily guarded. The dispassionate candidates are not so often disappointed, nor so easily discouraged; they are intent and advancing when the others have given over; and then they enjoy what they get with much more satisfaction, because they pursued it with less greediness.

Angry and choleric men are as ungrateful and unsociable as thunder and lightning, being in themselves all storm and tempest; but quiet and easy natures are like fair weather, welcome to all, and acceptable to all men; they gather together what the others disperse, and reconcile all whom the others incense. And as they have the good will and the good wishes of all other men, so they have the full possession of themselves, have all their own thoughts at peace, and enjoy quiet and ease

-in their own fortunes how strait soever; whereas the other neither love nor are beloved, and make war the more faintly upon others, because they have no peace within themselves; and though they are very ill company to every body else, they are worst of all to themselves, which is a punishment that nature has provided for them who delight in being vexatious and uneasy to others.

ESSAY 4.

ENVY.

(*Lord Clarendon.*)

IF envy, like anger, did not burn itself by its own fire, and consume and destroy those persons it possesses, before it can destroy those it hates, it would set the world on fire, and leave the most excellent persons the most miserable.

Of all the affections and passions which lodge themselves within the breast of man, envy is the most troublesome, the most restless, has the most of malignity, the most of poison. The object to which she bears immortal hatred is virtue, and the war she makes is always against the best and virtu-

ous men, at least against those who have some signal perfection. No other passion vents itself with that circumspection and deliberation, and is in all its rage and extent, in awe of some controul. The most cholerick and angry man may offend an honest and worthy person, but he chuses it not; he had rather provoke a worse man, and always recollects himself upon the sight of the magistrate. Lust, that is blind and frantic, courts the worst company, and seldom assaults chastity. But envy, a more pernicious passion, is inquisitive, observes whose merit most draws the eyes of men, is most crowned by the general suffrage; and against that person shoots all her venom, and without any noise enters into all unlawful combinations to destroy him.

Though the high condition of Solomon kept him from feeling the effects of envy (for kings can only be envied by kings) he well discovered her uncontrollable power. Wrath, he says, is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who can stand before envy. Let wrath be as cruel as it will, a stronger wrath can disarm it, or application and address can pacify it, fair words have power over it; and let anger be never so outrageous, it can be resisted, and will extinguish itself. They both give fair warning, are discovered afar off, and we have time to fight or fly; but envy has no fixed or open residence; no man knows where she dwells, nor can discern where she marches. Envy is a flying squadron, that declares no war; but breaks into our quarters when we do not suspect

her approach, wounds our reputation, stifles the brightness of our merit, and works even upon our friends to suspend their good opinion, and to doubt whether they are not deceived, and whether we are as good as we appear to be. If our credit be so well built, so firm, as not easily to be shaken by calumny and insinuation, envy, then, once commends us, and extols us beyond reason to those upon whom we depend, till they become jealous, and so blow us up when they cannot throw us down.

There is no guard to be kept against envy, because no man knows where it dwells ; and generous and innocent men are seldom jealous and suspicious till they feel the wound, or discern some notorious symptom. Envy shelters herself for the most part in dark and melancholy constitutions, yet sometimes gets into less suspected lodgings ; but never owns to be within, when asked for. All other passions do not only betray and discover, but likewise confess themselves : the choleric man confesses he is angry, and the proud man confesses he is ambitious ; the covetous man never denies that he loves money, or the drunkard that he loves wine ; but no envious man ever confessed that he envied. He commands his words much better than his looks, and those would betray him, if he had not bodily infirmities apparent enough, that those of the mind cannot easily be discovered, but in the mischief they do.

Envy pretends always to be a rival to virtue, and to court honour only by merit, and never to be afflicted but on the behalf of justice, when persons less meritorious are preferred. And it is so far true, that she seldom assaults unfortunate virtue, and is as seldom troubled for any success, however unworthy, that does not carry a man to a higher elevation than the envious man himself can attain; he envies and hates, and would destroy all who have better parts or better fortune than himself; he has more pride and ambition than any other sort of sinner.

ESSAY 5.

OF STUDIES.

(Lord Bacon.)

STUDIES serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privacy and retirement; for ornament, is in discourse, and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business: for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs come best from those that are learned.

To spend too much time in studies is sloth ; to use them too much for ornament is affectation ; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humour of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience ; for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study ; and studies themselves give directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them ; for they teach not their own use, which is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested : that is, some books are to be read only in parts ; others to be read but not curiously ; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others ; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books ; else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things.

Reading makes a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man ; and therefore if a man write little, he had need of a great memory, if he confer little, he had need of a present wit, and if he read little, he had need of much cunning, to

seem to know what he does not. Histories make men wise, poets witty, the mathematics subtle, natural philosophy deep, moral philosophy grave, logic and rhetoric able to contend. "Abeunt studia in mores."

Nay, there is no stand or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies, like as diseases of the body may have appropriate regimen; bowling is good for the stone and reins, shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head, and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics, for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away ever so little, he must begin again; if he be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen, for they are Cymini sectores. If he be not apt at investigation, and to call upon one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyer's cases; so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

ESSAY 6.

OF GREATNESS.

(Cowley.)

"SINCE we cannot attain to greatness," says Montagne, "let us have our revenge by railing at it." This he spoke but in jest. I believe he desired it no more than I do, and had less reason; for he enjoyed so plentiful and honourable a fortune in a most excellent country, as allowed him all the real conveniences of it, separated and purged from the inconveniences. If I were but in his condition, I should think it hard measure, without being convicted of any crime, to be sequestered from it and made one of the principal officers of state. But the reader may think that what I now say is of small authority, because I never was nor never shall be put to the trial; I can therefore only make my protestation,

If ever I more riches did desire
Than cleanliness and quiet do require;
If e'er ambition did my fancy cheat,
With any wish so mean as to be great;
Continue, heaven, still from me to remove
The humble blessings of the life I love.

I know very many men will despise and some pity me for this humour, as a poor spirited fellow; but I am content, and like Horace, thank God for being so.

"Dii bene fecerunt inopis me quodque pusilli

"Fingerunt animi." Sat. 1. iv. 17.

I confess I love littleness almost in all things; a little convenient estate, a little company, and a very little feast; and if I were ever to fall in love again (which is a great passion, and therefore I hope I have done with it) it would be, I think, with prettiness, rather than with majestical beauty.* I would neither wish that my mistress nor my fortune should be a *bona roba*; or as Homer uses to describe his beauties, like a daughter of great Jupiter for the stateliness and largeness of her person, but as Lucretius says.

Parvula, pumilio, *Χαρίων μία*, tota merum sal.

Luc. iv. 1155.

Where there is one man of this, I believe there are a thousand of Senecio's mind, whose ridiculous affectation of grandeur Seneca the elder describes to this effect. Senecio was a man of a turbid and confused wit, who could not endure to speak any but mighty words and sentences, till this humour.

* There is a pretty epigram in the French which elegantly expresses this idea,

"Petit bien qui ne doit rien,

"Petit jardin, petite table,

"Petit minois, qui m'aime bien,

"Sunt pour mois des choses delectables.

grew at last into so notorious a habit, or rather disease, as became the sport of the whole town. He would have no servants but huge massive fellows, no plate nor household stuff, but thrice as big as the fashion. You may believe me, for I speak it without raillery, his extravagancy rose at last into such a madness that he would not put on a pair of shoes, each of which was not big enough for both his feet; he would eat nothing but what was great, nor touch any fruit but horse plumbs and pound pears: he kept a concubine, that was a very giantess, and made her walk too always in chiopins, till at last he got the surname of Senecio Grandio, which Messala said, was not his *cognomen* but his *cognomentum*.*

This is the character that Seneca gives of this hyperbolical fop, whom we consider with amazement, and yet there are very few who are not in some things, and to some degrees Grandios. Is any thing more common, than to see our ladies of quality wear such high shoes, as they cannot walk in without one to lead them; † and a gown as long again as their body, so that they cannot pass to the next room without a page or two to hold it up? I may safely say that all the ostentation of our grantees, is just like a train, of no use,

* Was not his surname but his nick-name.

† This description is scarcely exaggerated. In the present time high heels are out of fashion; but the long trains recently worn, might still furnish a subject for satire. (1808.)

but horribly cumbersome and incommodious. What is all this, but a spice of a Grandio? how tedious would this be, if we were always bound to it! I do believe there is no king who would not rather be deposed, than endure every day of his reign all the ceremonies of his coronation.

The mightiest princes are glad to fly often from these majestic pleasures (which is methinks no small disparagement to them) as it were for refuge, to the most contemptible diversions and meanest recreations of the vulgar, nay even of children. One of the most powerful and fortunate princes of the world of late, could find out no delight so satisfactory as the keeping of little singing birds * and hearing them and whistling to them. What did the emperors of the whole world? If ever any men had the free and full enjoyment of all human greatness (nay, that would not suffice, for they would be gods too) they certainly possessed it; and yet Domitian, who styled himself lord and god of the earth, could not tell how to pass his whole day pleasantly without spending constantly two or three hours in catching flies, and killing them with a bodkin, as if his godship had been Beelzebub. † One of his predecessors, Nero (who never put any

* Louis xiii. We scarcely need remind the reader who is acquainted with foreign history, that the celebrated De Luynes, when a simple page, first gained the favour of his royal master by training singing birds.

† Beelzebub signifies the lord of flies. Cowley.

bounds, nor met with any stop to his appetite) could divert himself with no pastime more agreeable than to run about the streets all night in disguise, and abuse the women and affront the passengers, and sometimes beat them, and sometimes be beaten by them; this was one of his imperial nocturnal pleasures. His chief gratification was to sing and play upon a fiddle, in the habit of a minstrel upon the public stage. He was prouder of the garlands that were given to his divine voice (as they called it then in those kind of prizes) than all his forefathers were of their triumphs over nations. He did not at his death complain that so mighty an emperor and the last of all the Cæsarian race of deities, should be brought to so shameful and miserable an end: but only cried out "Alas! what pity it is that so excellent a musician should perish in this manner!" His uncle Claudius spent half his time in playing at dice; that was the main fruit of his sovereignty. I omit the madneses of Caligula's delights, and the execrable sordidness of those of Tiberius. Would one think that Augustus himself, the highest and most fortunate of mankind, a person endowed too with many excellent parts of nature, should be so embarrassed for want of recreations, as to be found playing at nuts and bounding stones with little Syrian and Moorish boys, whose company he took delight in for their prating and their wantonness?

Was it for this that Rome's best blood he spilt,
With so much falshood, so much guilt?
Was it for this, that his ambition strove,
To equal Cæsar first; and after Jove?
Greatness is barren sūre of solid joys;
Her merchandise, I fear, is all in toys;
She would not, else, sure, so uncivil be,
To treat his universal majesty,
His new created deity,
With nuts, and bounding stones, and boys.

But we must excuse her for this meagre entertainment; she has not really wherewithal to make such feasts as we imagine. Her guests must be contented sometimes with but slender cates, and with the same cold meats served over and over again till they become nauseous. When you have pared away all the vanity, what solid and natural contentment does there remain which may not be had for five hundred pounds a year? Not so many servants or horses, but a few good ones, which will do all the business as well; not so many choice dishes at every meal; but at several meals all of them, which makes them both the more healthy and the more pleasant; not so rich garments, nor so frequent changes; but as warm and as comely, and so frequent change too, as is every jot as good for the master though not for the taylor, or valet de chambre; not such a stately palace, nor gilt rooms, or the costliest sorts of tapestry, but a convenient brick house, with decent wainscot, and pretty forest work hangings.

Lastly, (for I omit all other particulars) and will end with that which I love most in both conditions, not whole woods cut in walks, nor vast parks, nor fountains, nor cascade gardens; but herb, and fruit, and flower gardens, which are more useful, and the water every whit as clean and wholesome as if it darted from the breasts of a marble nymph, or the urn of a river god.

But if you prefer a great to a moderate state of life, consider the inseparable accidents of sloth; servitude, disquiet, danger, and most commonly guilt, inherent in the one, in the other liberty, tranquillity, security, and innocence. And when you have thought upon this, you will confess that to be a truth, which appeared to you before but a ridiculous paradox, that a low fortune is better guarded and attended than a high one. If indeed, we only look upon the flourishing head of the tree, it appears a most beautiful object.

—sed quantum vertice ad auras
Æthereas, tantum radice ad tartara tendit.

Virg. Geor. ii. 291.

As far as up towards heaven the branches grow,
So far the root sinks down to hell below.

Another horrible disgrace to greatness is, that it is for the most part in pitiful want and distress: what a wonderful thing is this? Unless it degenerate into avarice, and so cease to be greatness, it falls perpetually into such necessities as drive it

into all the meanest and most sordid ways of borrowing, cozenage, and robbery.

Mancipii locuples eget æris Cappadocium rex.

Hor. 1. Ep. vi. 39.

This is the case of almost all great men as well as of the poor king of Cappadocia; they abound with slaves, but are indigent of money. The antient Roman emperors, who had the riches of the whole world for their revenue, had wherewithal to live (one would have thought) pretty well at ease, and to have been exempt from the pressures of extreme poverty. But yet with most of them it was much otherwise, and they fell perpetually into such miserable penury, that they were forced to devour or squeeze most of their friends and servants, to cheat with infamous projects, to ransack and pillage all their provinces.

This fashion of imperial grandeur is imitated by all inferior and subordinate sorts of it, as if it were a point of honour. They must be cheated of a third part of their estates, two other thirds they must expend in vanity; so that they remain debtors for all the necessary provisions of life, and have no way to satisfy those debts, but out of the succours and supplies of rapine; as riches increase (says Solomon) so do the mouths that devour them. The master mouth has no more than before. The owner methinks is like Oenus in the fable, who is perpetually winding a rope of hay, and an ass at the end perpetually eating it.

Out of these inconveniences arises naturally one more, which is that no greatness can be satisfied or contented with itself: still if it could mount up a little higher, it would be happy; if it could gain but that point, it would obtain all its desires; but yet at last, when it reaches the very top of the pic of Teneriff, it is in very great danger of breaking its neck downwards, but in no possibility of ascending upwards into the seat of tranquillity above the moon. The first ambitious men in the world, the old giants, are said to have made an heroic attempt of scaling heaven in despite of the Gods; and they cast Ossa upon Olympus, and Pelion upon Ossa; two or three mountains more, they thought, would have done their business, but the thunder spoilt all the work, when they had mounted to the third story.

“ And what a noble plot was crost ;

“ And what a brave design was lost ?”

A famous person of their offspring, the late giant * of our nation, when from the condition of a very inconsiderable captain, he had made himself lieutenant general of an army of little Titans, which was his first mountain, and afterwards general, which was his second, and after that absolute tyrant of three kingdoms, which was the third, and almost touched the heaven which he affected, is believed to have died with grief and discontent

* Cromwell.

because he could not attain to the honest name of a king, and the old formality of a crown, though he had before exceeded the power by a wicked usurpation. If he could have compassed that, he would perhaps have wanted something else that is necessary to felicity, and pined away for want of the title of an emperor or a god.

The reason of this is, that greatness has no reality in nature, but is a creature of the fancy, a notion that consists only in relation and comparison: it is indeed an idol, but St. Paul teaches us that an idol is nothing in the world. There is in truth, no rising or meridian of the sun, but only in respect to several places; there is no right or left, no upper hand in nature, every thing is little and every thing is great, according as it is diversly compared. There may be perhaps some village in Scotland or Ireland where I might be a great man; and in that case I should be like Cæsar, (you wonder how Cæsar and I should be like one another in any thing) and chuse rather to be the first man of the village than second at Rome.

Our country is called *Great Britain*, in regard only to a lesser of the same name, it would be but a ridiculous epithet for it when we compare it with the kingdom of China. That too is but a pitiful rood of ground in comparison of the whole earth besides; and this whole globe of earth, which we account so immense a body, is but one point or atom in relation to those numberless worlds that

are scattered up and down in the infinite space of the sky which we behold.

I shall end this essay with an ode of Horace, not exactly copied, but rudely imitated.

HORACE. LIB. III. ODE I.

Odi profanum vulgus, &c.

HENCE ye profane ; I hate ye all ;
Both the great vulgar, and the small
To virgin minds which yet their native whiteness hold,
Not yet discolour'd with the love of gold,
(That jaundice of the soul
Which makes it look so gilded and so foul)
To you, ye very few, these truths I tell ;
The muse inspires my song ; hark, and observe it well.

2.

We look on men and wonder at such odds
'Twixt things, that were the same by birth ;
We look on kings as giants of the earth,
These giants are but pigmies to the gods.
The humblest bush and proudest oak
Are but of equal proof against the thunder-stroke :
Beauty, and strength, and wit, and wealth, and power,
Have their short flourishing hour ;
And love to see themselves and smile,
And joy in their pre-eminence a while ;
Even so in the same land,
Poor weeds, with corn, gay flowers, together stand ;
Alas, death mows down all with an impartial hand.

3.

And all ye men, whom greatness does so please,
Ye feast, I fear, like Damocles ;
If ye your eyes could upwards move,
(But ye, I fear, think nothing is above)
Ye would perceive by what a little thread
The sword still hangs over your head.

No tide of wine would drown your cares;
 No mirth nor music over-noise your fears.
 The fear of death would you so watchful keep,
 As not to admit the image of it, sleep.

4.

Sleep is a god too proud to wait in palaces,
 And yet so humble too, as not to scorn
 The meanest country cottages;
 His poppy grows amidst the corn.
 The halcyon sleep will never build her nest
 In any stormy breast;
 'Tis not enough that she does find
 Clouds and darkness in their mind;
 Darkness but half her work will do:
 'Tis not enough, she must find quiet too.

5.

The man, who in all wishes he does make,
 Does only nature's counsel take,
 That wise and happy man will never fear
 The evil aspects of the year;
 Nor tremble, though two comets should appear.
 He does not look in almanacks to see,
 Whether he fortunate shall be.
 Let Mars and Saturn in the heavens conjoin
 And what they please against the world design,
 So Jupiter within him shine.

6.

If of your pleasures and desires no end be found,
 God to your cares and fears will set no bound.
 What would content you? who can tell?
 Ye fear so much to lose what ye have got,
 As if ye lik'd it well:
 Ye strive for more, as if ye lik'd it not.
 Go level hills, and fill up seas,
 Spare nought that may your wanton fancy please,
 But trust me, when ye've done all this,
 Much will be missing still, and much will be amiss.

ESSAY 7.

INDUSTRY.

(Lord Clarendon.)

INDUSTRY is the cordial that nature has provided to cure all its own infirmities and diseases, and to supply all its defects; the weapon to preserve and defend us against all the strokes and assaults of fortune; it is our guide that conducts us through any noble enterprise to a noble end. What we obtain without it is by chance; what we obtain with it, is by virtue. It is a great pity that so powerful an instrument should be put to very ill purposes. It was the first foundation of Jeroboam's greatness. "And Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph," by which he gained credit and authority to deprive his son of the greater part of his dominions.

There is no act or science too difficult for industry to attain; it is the gift of tongues, and makes a man understood and valued in all countries, and by all nations; it is the philosopher's stone that turns all metals and even stones into gold, and suffers no want to break into its dwellings; it is the

North-west passage* that brings the merchant's ships into port, as soon as he can desire ; in a word, it conquers all enemies, and makes fortune itself pay contribution.

If this omnipotent engine were applied to all virtuous and worthy purposes, it would root out all vice from the world ; for the industry of honest men is much more powerful than the industry of the wicked, which prevails not so much by its own activity as by the remissness and supine laziness of their unwary enemies. The beauty and the brightness of it appear most powerfully to our observation by the view of the contempt and deformity of that which is most opposite to it, idleness, which enfeebles and enervates the strength of the soundest constitutions, shrinks and stupifies the faculties of the most vigorous mind, and gives all the destroying diseases to body and mind, without the contribution from any other vice. Idleness is the sin and the punishment of beggars, and should be detested by all noble persons as a disease pestilential to their fortune and their honour.

I know not how it comes to pass, but the world pays dear for the folly of it ; that this transcendant qualification of industry is looked upon only as an

* In the age of Clarendon, one of the favourite objects was the discovery of a passage by sea to the North of the American Continent, as in the present time it is to discover the North East passage, or one to the North of Siberia.

assistant fit for vulgar spirits, to which nature has not been bountiful in the distribution of her store ; as the refuge for dull and heavy men who have neither their conceptions or apprehensions within any distance, nor can arrive at any ordinary design without much labour and toil. Men of sharp and pregnant parts, it is said, stand in no need of industry ; whose rich fancy presents to them in a moment the view of all contingencies, and all that occurs to formal and elaborate men after all their efforts. They are supposed to view, and survey, and judge, and execute, while the others are tormenting themselves with imaginations of difficulty till all opportunities are lost. It is considered an affront to the liberality of nature, and to the excellent qualities she has bestowed upon them, to take pains to find what they have about them, and to doubt that which is most evident to them ; because men who have more dim sights cannot discern so far as they ; and by this haughty childishness they quickly deprive themselves of the plentiful supplies which they have received from nature, for want of nourishment and recruits.

If diligent and industrious men raise themselves with very ordinary assistance from nature, to a great and deserved height of reputation and honour, by their solid acquired wisdom and confessed judgment, what noble flights would such men make with equal industry, who are likewise liberally endowed with the advantages of nature ?

and without that assistance experience makes it manifest unto us, that those early buddings, how vigorous soever they appear, if they are neglected and uncultivated by serious labour, wither and fade away without producing any thing worthy of notice. Tully's rule to his orator is applicable to all conditions of life. "Quantum detraxit ex studio tantum amisit ex gloria." As much as is taken from study is lost to glory.

ESSAY 8.

OF YOUTH AND AGE.

(*Lord Bacon.*)

A MAN, who is young in years, may be old in hours, if he have lost no time ; but that rarely happens. Generally youth is like the first cogitations, not so wise as the second ; for there is a youth in thoughts as well as in ages ; and yet the invention of young men is more lively than that of old, and imaginations stream into their minds better, and as it were more divinely. Natures that

have much heat, and violent desires and perturbations, are not ripe for action, till they have passed the meridian of their years; as it was with Julius Cæsar, and Septimus Severus, of the latter of whom it is said "*Juventutem egit erroribus, imo furoribus, plenam.*"* And yet he was the ablest emperor of almost all the list. But reposed natures may do well in youth, as it is seen in Augustus Cæsar, Cosmo, duke of Florence, Gaston de Foix, and others. On the other hand heat and vivacity in age form an excellent composition for business.

Young men are fitter to invent than to judge, fitter for execution than counsel, and fitter for new projects than for settled business; for the experience of age in things that fall within its compass directs them, but in new things abuses them. The errors of young men are the ruin of business; but the errors of aged men amount only to this, that more might have been done, or sooner. Young men in the conduct and management of affairs, embrace more than they can hold, stir more than they can quiet, fly to the end without consideration of the means and degrees, pursue some few principles which they have discovered by chance absurdly, fear not to innovate, which draws unknown inconveniences, use extreme remedies at first; and that which doubles all errors, will not acknowledge or retract them, like a restive horse,

* He passed his youth not merely in errors but in madriesses.

that will neither stop nor turn. Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little; repent too soon, and seldom drive business to its full period, but content themselves with mediocrity of success.

Certainly it is good to unite both in the same employments; for that will be good for the present, because the virtues of either age may correct the defects of both; and good for succession, that young men may be learners while men in age are actors. And lastly, good for external accidents, because authority follows old men, and favour and popularity youth. But for the moral part, perhaps, youth will have the preeminence, as age has for the politic: and certainly the more we drink of the world the more it intoxicates; and age rather improves in the powers of the understanding than in the virtues of the will and affections.

Some have an over early ripeness in their years, which fades betimes. These are, first, such as have brittle wits, of which the edge is soon turned; such as was Hermogenes, the rhetorician, whose books are exceedingly subtle, and who afterwards waxed stupid. A second sort is of those that have some natural dispositions which have better grace in youth than in age, such as is a fluent and luxuriant speech, which well becomes youth but not age. Tully says of Hortensius, "*idem manebat neque decebat.*" He continued the same as in his youth but it did not become him. The third is, of such as take

too high a strain at first, and are more magnanimous than the course of years can uphold. As was Scipio Africanus, of whom Livy says, "ultima primis cedebant." The later acts of his life were inferior to the first.

ESSAY 9.

SUSPICION.

(*Lord Bacon.*)

SUSPICIONS among thoughts are like bats among birds, they will fly by night. Certainly they are to be repressed, or at least well guarded, for they cloud the mind, separate friends, and clash with business; they dispose kings to tyranny, husbands to jealousy, wise men to irresolution and melancholy. They are defects not in the heart but in the brain, for they take place in the firmest natures, as in the composition of Henry the Seventh of England, there was not a more suspicious man, nor a more firm; and in such a composition they do little

hurt. For commonly they are not admitted without the appearance of probability; but in fearful natures they gain ground too fast. Nothing makes a man suspect much, more than knowing little; and therefore we should remedy suspicion by endeavouring to know more, and not smother our suspicions.

What would men have? Do they think those whom they employ and deal with, are saints? Do they not think they will have their own ends and be truer to themselves than to their employers? Therefore there is no better way to moderate suspicions, than to reckon such suspicions true, and yet to bridle them as false. We ought so far to use suspicions, as to take care that if true, that which we suspect may do us no hurt. Suspicions that the mind itself gathers are but buzzes; but suspicions that are artificially nourished and suggested by the tales and whisperings of others have stings. Certainly the best method to clear the way in such a wood of suspicions is frankly to communicate them to the party suspected; for thereby we shall be sure to know more of the truth of them than we did before; and at the same time render that party more circumspect, not to give further cause of suspicion.

But this should not be done to men of base natures; for such, if they find themselves once suspected, will never be true. The Italians say

“*sospetta licenzia fide,**” as if suspicion gave a passport to fidelity, but it ought rather to kindle it to discharge itself.

ESSAY 10.

PRAISE.

(*Lord Bacon.*)

PRAISE is as the reflection of virtue, but it is as the glass, or body that gives the reflection. If it be from the common people it is commonly false, and rather follows vain persons than virtuous. For the common people understand not many excellent virtues. The lowest virtues draw praise from them, the middle virtues work in them astonishment or admiration, but of the highest virtues, they have no sense or perception, and appearances, *virtutibus similes*, or semblances of virtue, serve best with them. Certainly fame is like a river, that bears up things light and swollen, and drowns things weighty and solid. But if persons of quality and judg-

* “Suspicion dismisses fidelity.”

ment concur, then it is as the scripture says, "nomen bonum instar unguenti fragrantis." A good name is sweet smelling odour.

There are so many false points of praise that we may justly deem it suspicious. Some praises proceed merely from flattery, and a common flatterer will have certain common attributes which may serve every man. A cunning flatterer will follow the arch flatterer, which is a man's self; will uphold him most in that wherein he thinks best of himself. But if he be an impudent flatterer, look wherein a man is most conscious to himself that he is most defective and is most out of countenance in himself, that will the flatterer entitle him to perform. *Specta conscientia*. Some praises come of good wishes and respects, which is a form due in civility to kings and great persons; *laudando præcipere*, to instruct by praising, whereby telling men what they are, they represent to them what they should be. Some men are praised maliciously to their hurt, thereby to stir envy and jealousy towards them; *pessimum genus inimicorum laudantium*, the worst of all species of flatterers, insomuch that it was a proverb among the Greeks, that he who was praised to his hurt should have a pimple rise on his nose; as we say that a blister will rise upon his tongue who tells a lie.

Moderate praise used opportunely is that which does good. Solomon says, he that praiseth his

friend aloud rising early, it shall be to him no better than a curse. Magnifying any man or matter too much excites contradiction, and procures envy and scorn. To praise ourselves cannot be decent, except it be in rare cases; but our office or profession may be praised with a good grace and a kind of magnanimity. The Cardinals of Rome, who are theologians and friars, and schoolmen, have a phrase of notable contempt and scorn towards civil business, for they call all temporal business of wars, embassies, judicature, and other employments, *Sbirrerie*, which is under-sheriffries, as if they were but matters for under-sheriffs and catchpoles, though many times those under-sheriffries do more good than their high speculations. Saint Paul, when he boasts of himself, often interlaces "I speak like a fool," but speaking of his calling he says "I glory in my apostleship."

ESSAY 11.

MYSELF.

(Cowley.)

IT is a hard and nice subject for a man to write of himself; it grates his own heart to say any thing of disparagement, and the reader's ears to hear any thing of praise from him. There is no danger from me of offending him in this kind: neither my mind, nor my body, nor my fortune, allow me any materials for that vanity. It is sufficient for my own contentment that they have preserved me from being scandalous or remarkable on the defective side. But besides that I shall here speak of myself only in relation to the subject of these Essays, and shall be likelier thereby to fall into the contempt, than to rise up to the estimation of most people.

As far as my memory can return back into my past life, before I knew, or was capable of guessing what the world, or the glories or business of it were, the natural affections of my soul gave me a secret bent or aversion from them, as some plants are said to turn away from others, by an

antipathy inperceptible to themselves, and inscrutable to man's understanding. Even when I was a very young boy at school, instead of running about on holidays, and playing with my fellows, I was wont to steal from them, and walk into the fields, either alone, or with a book, or with some one companion, if I could find any of the same temper. I was then, too, so much an enemy to all constraint, that my masters could never prevail on me, by any persuasions or encouragement, to learn without book the common rules of grammar, in which they dispensed with me alone, because they found I made a shift to do the usual exercise out of my own reading and observation. That I was then of the same mind as I am now (which I confess I wonder at myself) may appear by the latter end of an ode, which I made when I was but thirteen years old, and which was then printed with many other verses. The beginning of it is boyish, but of this part which I here set down, (if a very little were corrected) I should hardly now be much ashamed.

9.

This only grant me, that my means may lie
Too low for envy, for contempt too high ;
Some honour I would have,
Not for great deeds, but good alone ;
Th' unknown are better, than ill known.
Rumour can ope the grave :
Acquaintance I would have, but when't depends
Not on the number, but the choice of friends.

10.

Books should, not business, entertain the light,
And sleep, as undisturb'd as death, the night.

My house a cottage more
Than palace, and should fitting be
For all my use, no luxury.

My garden painted o'er
With nature's hand, not art's; and pleasures yield,
Horace might envy in his Sabine field.

11.

Thus would I double my life's fading space;
For he that runs it well, twice runs his race.

And in this true delight,
Those unbought sports, this happy state,
I would not fear, nor wish, my fate;

But boldly say each night,
To-morrow let my sun his beams display,
Or in clouds hide them, I have liv'd to-day.

You may see by it, I was even then acquainted with the poets (for the conclusion is taken out of Horace *) and perhaps it was the immature and immoderate love of them which stamped first, or rather engraved, these characters in me: they were like letters cut into the bark of a young tree, which with the tree grow still proportionably. But how this love came to be produced in me so early is a hard question. I believe I can tell the particular little chance that

* ——— ille potens sul,
Lætusque deget, cui licet in diem
Dixisse, vixi; cras vel atrâ
Nube polum, Pater, occupato,
Vel sole puro.——

Od. III. xxix. 41.

filled my head first with such chimes of verse, as have never since left ringing there ; for I remember, when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to be in my mother's parlour (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion), but there was wont to be Spenser's works. This I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, and giants, and monsters, and brave houses, which I found every where there (though my understanding had little to do with all this) ; and by degrees with the tinkling of the rhyme and dance of the numbers ; so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a poet before I reached the age of reflection,

With these affections of mind, and my heart wholly set upon letters, I went to the university ; but was soon torn from thence by that violent public storm, which would suffer nothing to stand where it did, but rooted up every plant, even from the princely cedars, to me the hyssop. Yet I had as good fortune as could have befallen me in such a tempest ; for I was cast by it into the family of one of the best persons, and into the court of one of the best princesses, of the world.* Now though I was here engaged in

* When the queen and family of Charles the first retired into France, Cowley followed them to Paris,

ways most contrary to the original design of my life, that is, into much company, and no small business, and into a daily sight of greatness, both militant and triumphant (for that was the state then of the English and French courts) yet all this was so far from altering my opinion that it only added the confirmation of reason to, that, which was before but natural inclination. I saw plainly all the paint of that kind of life, the nearer I came to it; and that beauty, which I did not fall in love with, when, for aught I knew, it was real, was not like to bewitch or entice me, when I saw that it was adulterate. I met with several great persons whom I liked very well, but could not perceive that any part of their greatness was to be liked or desired, no more than I would be glad or content to be in a storm though I saw many ships which rid safely and bravely in it; a storm did not much agree with my inclination, if it did with my courage.

Though I was in a crowd of as good company as could be found any where; though I was in business of great and honourable trust, though I eat at the best table, and enjoyed the best conveniences for present subsistence that ought to be desired by a man of my condition in banish-

became secretary to lord Germain, afterwards earl of St. Albans, and was employed in cyphering and decyphering the letters which passed between the king and queen.

ment and public distresses; yet I could not abstain from renewing my old school boy's wish in a copy of verses to the same effect:

Well then: I now do plainly see,
This busy world and I shall ne'er agree, &c.*

And I never then proposed to myself any other advantage from his majesty's happy restoration, but the getting into some moderately convenient retreat in the country, which I thought in that case I might easily have compassed, as well as some others, who with no greater probabilities or pretences, have arrived to extraordinary fortunes. But I had before written a shrewd prophecy against myself; and I think Apollo inspired me in the truth though not in the elegance of it.

Thou neither great at court, nor in the war,
Nor at the exchange shall be, nor at the wrangling bar,
Content thyself with the small barren praise,

Which neglected verse does raise.

She spake, and all my years to come
Took their unlucky doom.

Their several ways of life let others chuse,
Their several pleasures let them use;

But I was born for love, and for a muse.

With Fate what boots it to contend!

Such I began, such am, and so must end.

The star that did my being frame
Was but a lambent flame,

* This little piece, called the Wish, is printed in that collection of his poems which was entitled, the Mistress. Johnson's Poets, v. 8. p. 22.

And some small light it did dispense,
 But neither heat nor influence.
 No matter, Cowley; let proud Fortune see
 That thou canst her despise no less than she does thee.
 Let all her gifts the portion be
 Of folly, lust, and flattery,
 Fraud, extortion, calumny,
 Murder, infidelity,
 Rebellion, and hypocrisy.
 Do thou not grieve nor blush to be,
 As all th' inspir'd tuneful men,
 As all thy great forefathers were, from Homer down
 to Ben. *

However, by the failing of the forces which I had expected, I did not quit the design I had resolved on; I cast myself into it *à corps perdu*, without making capitulations, or taking counsel of fortune. But God laughs at a man, who says to his soul, take thy ease. I met presently not only with many little impediments, but with so much sickness (a new misfortune to me) as would have spoiled the happiness of an emperor as well as mine; yet I do neither repent, nor alter my course. *Non ego perfidum dixi sacramentum.* *

Nothing shall separate me from a mistress, which I have loved so long, and have now at last married; although she neither has brought me a rich portion, nor yet lived so quietly with me as I hoped from her.

* Meaning Ben Jonson.

* This is a line from the beautiful Ode of Horace addressed to Mæcenas, in which he vows not to survive his friend and patron.

Nec vos dulcissima mundi
 Nomina, vos musæ, libertas, otia, libri,
 Hortique, sylvæque, animâ remanente, relinquam.

Nor by me e'er shall you,
 You, of all names the sweetest and the best,
 You muses, books, and liberty and rest ;
 You, gardens, fields, and woods forsaken be ;
 As long as life itself forsakes not me.

But this is a very pretty ejaculation ; because
 I have concluded all the other chapters with a
 copy of verses, I will maintain the humour to the
 last. *

Since, dearest friend, 'tis your desire to see
 A true receipt of happiness from me ;
 These are the chief ingredients, if not all ;
 Take an estate neither too great nor small,
 Which *quantum sufficit* the doctors call.
 Let this estate from parent's care descend,
 The getting it too much of life does spend.
 Take such a ground, whose gratitude may be
 A fair encouragement for industry.
 Let constant fires the winter's fury tame ;
 And let thy kitchen's be a vestal flame, †
 Thee to the town let never suit at law,
 And rarely, very rarely, business draw ;
 Thy active mind in equal temper keep,
 In undisturbed peace, yet not in sleep.
 Let exercise a vigorous health maintain,
 Without which all the composition's vain.

* Imitated from a beautiful Epigram of Martial,

" *Vitam quæ faciunt beatiores,*" lib. 10. ep. 47.

† Alluding to the *perpetual* fire in the Temple of Cybele, maintained by the Vestal Virgins.

In the same weight prudence and innocence take,
 Ana * of each does the just mixture make.
 But a few friendships wear, and let them be
 By nature and by fortune fit for thee;
 Instead of art and luxury in food
 Let mirth and freedom make thy table good.
 If any cares into thy day time creep,
 At night, without wine's opium, let them sleep.
 Let rest, which nature does to darkness wed,
 And not lust, recommend thee to thy bed.
 Be satisfied and pleas'd with what thou art,
 Act cheerfully and well th' allotted part;
 Enjoy the present hour, be thankful for the past,
 And neither fear nor wish, th' approaches of the
 last.

EPITAPHIUM VIVI AUCTORIS.

, Martialis Lib. X. Ep. 96.

Hic, o viator, sub lare parvulo,
 Couleius hic est conditus, hic jacet,
 Defunctus humani laboris
 Sorte, supervacuâque vitâ,
 Non indecorâ pauperie nitens,
 Et non inerti nobilis otii,
 Vanoque dilectis popello,
 Divitiis animosus hostis.
 Possis ut illum dicere mortuum;
 En terra jam num quantula sufficit?
 Exempta sit curis, viator,
 Terra sit illa levis, precare.
 Hic sparge flores, sparge breves rosas,
 Nam vita gaudet mortua floribus,
 Herbisque odoratis corona
 Vatis adhuc cinerem calentem!

* Ana, a word borrowed from medicine, meaning an equal quantity.

TRANSLATION.

EPITAPH ON THE LIVING AUTHOR.

1.

Here, stranger, in this humble nest,
Here Cowley sleeps ; here lies.
Scap'd all the toils that life molest,
And its superfluous joys.

2.

Here, in no sordid poverty,
And no inglorious ease,
He braves the world, and can defy
Its frowns and flatteries.

3.

The little earth he asks survey :
Is he not dead, indeed !
“ Light lie that earth,” good stranger pray,
“ Nor thorn upon it breed !”

4.

With flow'rs, fit emblem of his fame,
Compass your poet round :
With flow'rs of ev'ry fragrant name
Be his warm ashes crown'd !”

ESSAY 12.

ON THE TALENT FOR HUMOUR; AND PECULIARITIES OF THE ENGLISH NATION.

(Sir William Temple.)

ONE kind of poetry seems to have succeeded better with the moderns than with the antients, I mean that of the stage. In this the Italian, the Spanish, and the French have all had their different merits, and received their just applauses. Yet I am deceived, if our English has not by some force of a vein, natural perhaps to our country, and which with us is called Humour, a word peculiar to our language too, and hard to be expressed in any other; nor is it, that I know of, found in any foreign writer, unless it be Moliere, and yet his has too much of the farce to pass for the same with ours. Shakespeare was the first that opened this vein upon our stage which has run so freely and so pleasantly ever since. I have indeed often wondered to find it so little upon any others, being a subject so proper for them; since

humour is but a picture of particular life, as comedy is of general; and though it represents dispositions and customs less common, yet they are not less natural than those that are frequent among men; for if humour itself be forced, it loses all the grace, which indeed has been the fault of some of our poets most celebrated in this kind.

It may seem a defect in the antient stage that the characters introduced were so few and those so common; as a covetous old man, an amorous young witty wench; a crafty knave; a bragging soldier: the spectators met nothing upon the stage but what they met in the streets, and at every turn. All the variety is drawn only from different and uncommon events: whereas if the characters are so too, the diversity and the pleasure must needs be the more.

But as of most general customs in a country, there is usually some ground, from the nature of the people or climate; so there may be amongst us, for this vein of our stage, and a greater variety of humour in the picture, because there is a greater variety in the life. This may proceed from the native plenty of our soil, the inequality of our climate, as well as the ease of our government, and the liberty of professing opinions and factions which perhaps our neighbours may have about them but are forced to disguise, and thereby they may in time be extinguished.

Plenty begets wantonness and pride, wantonness is apt to invent, and pride scorns to imitate; liberty begets obstinacy, and obstinacy will not be constrained. Thus we have more originals, and more that appear what they are; we have more humour, because every man follows his own and takes a pride to show it.

On the contrary where the people are generally poor, and forced to hard labour, their actions and their lives are all of a piece; where they serve a hard master they must follow his example as well as commands, and are forced upon imitation in small matters, as well as obedience in great; so that some nations look as if they were all cast in one mould, or cut out all by one pattern (at least the common people by one, and the gentlemen by another); seem all of a sort by their habits, their customs, and even their talk and conversation, as well as in the application and pursuit of their actions and their lives.

Besides all this there is another sort of variety among us, which arises from our climate and the dispositions it naturally produces. We are not only more unlike one another than any nation I know, but we are more unlike ourselves too at several times, and owe to our very air some ill qualities as well as many good. We may allow some distempers incident to our climate, since so much health, vigour, and length of life have been generally ascribed to it; for among the Greek

and, Roman authors themselves, we shall find the Britons observed to live the longest and the Egyptians the shortest of any nations that were known in those ages. Besides I think none will dispute the native courage of our men and the beauty of our women, which may be elsewhere as great in particulars; but no where so in general; they may be (what is said of diseases) as acute in other places, but with us they are epidemical. For my own part, who have conversed with men of other nations, and such as have been both in great employments and esteem, I can say very impartially that I have not observed among any so much true genius as among the English; no where more sharpness of wit, more pleasantness of humour, more range of fancy, more penetration of thought or depth of reflection among the better sort; no where more goodness of nature and of meaning, and of plainness of sense and life, than among the common sort of country people; nor more blunt courage and honesty than among our seamen."

But with all this our country must be confessed to be what a great foreign physician called it, the region of spleen, which may arise a good deal from the great uncertainty and many sudden changes of our weather in all seasons of the year. And how much these affect the heads and hearts, especially of the finest tempers, is hardly to be believed by men whose thoughts are.

not turned to such speculations. This makes us unequal in our humours, inconstant in our passions, uncertain in our end, and even in our desires. Besides our different opinions, in religion and the factions they have raised or animated for fifty years past, have had an ill effect upon our manners and customs, producing more avarice, ambition, disguise, with their usual consequences, than were before in our constitution.

From all this it may happen, that there is no where more true zeal in the many different forms of devotion; and yet no where more knavery under the shews and pretences. There are no where so many disputers on religion, so many reasoners upon government, so many refiners upon politics, so many curious inquisitives, so many pretenders to business and state employments, greater porers upon books and plodders after wealth; and yet no where more abandoned libertines, more refined luxurists, extravagant debauchees, conceited gallants, more dabblers in poetry as well as politics, in philosophy and in chymistry. I have had several servants far gone in divinity; others in poetry; have known in the families of some friends a keeper deep in the Rosicrucian principles, and a laundress firm in those of Epicurus.

What effect soever such a composition or medley of humours among us may have upon our lives or our government, it must needs have

a good one upon our stage, and has given admirable play to our comic wits; so that in my opinion there is no vein of that sort, either anti-ent or modern, which excels or equals the humour of our plays. And for the rest I cannot but observe, to the honour of our country, that the good qualities among us seem to be natural, and the ill 'ones more accidental, and such as would be easily changed by the example of princes and the precepts of laws; such I mean as should be designed to form manners, restrain excesses, to encourage industry, to prevent men from making experiments beyond their fortunes, to countenance virtue, and raise that true esteem due to plain sense and common honesty.

ESSAY 13.

DELAYS.

(*Lord Bacon.*)

FORTUNE is like the market, where many times if you can stay little, the price will fall. And again, it is sometimes like Sybilla's offer, which at first offers the commodity at full, then consumes part and part, and still holds up the

price. For occasion (as it is in the common verse) turns a bald noddle, after she has presented her locks in front, and no hold taken. There is surely no greater wisdom, than well to time the beginnings and on-sets of things. Dangers are no more light, if they once seem light; and more dangers have deceived men, than forced them. Nay, it were better to meet some dangers half way, though they come nothing near, than to keep too long a watch upon their approaches; for if a man watch too long, it is odds he will fall asleep. On the other side, to be deceived with too long shadows, (as some have been, when the moon was low, and shone on their enemies back,) and so to shoot off before the time: or to teach dangers to come on, by over eagerness in meeting them, is another extreme. The ripeness or unripeness of the occasion (as we said) must ever be well weighed; and generally it is good to commit the beginnings of all great actions to Argus with his hundred eyes, and the ends to Briareus with his hundred hands; first to watch and then to speed. The helmet of Pluto, which makes the politic man go invisible, is secrecy in the counsel, and celerity in the execution. For when things are once come to the execution, there is no secrecy comparable to celerity; like the motion of a bullet in the air, which flies so swift as to outrun the eye.

ESSAY 14.

OBSCURITY.

(*Cowley.*)

"*Nam neque divitibus contingunt gaudia solis,
Nec vixit malè, qui natus, moriensque fefellit.*"

Hor. Lib. 1. Ep. 17. 9.

God made not pleasures only for the rich,
Nor have those men without their share too liv'd,
Who both in life and death the world deceiv'd.

THIS seems a strange sentence, thus literally translated, and looks as if it were in vindication of the men of business (for who else can deceive the world); whereas it is in commendation of those who live and die so obscurely, that the world takes no notice of them. This Horace calls deceiving the world, and in another place uses the same phrase

"*Secretum iter et fallentis semita vitæ.*"

The secret tracks of the deceiving life.

It is very elegant in Latin, but our English word will hardly bear up to that sense, and therefore Mr. Broom translates it very well.

"Or from a life, led, as it were, by stealth."

Yet we say, in our language, a thing deceives our sight, when it passes before us unperceived, and we may say well enough out of the same author,

“ Sometimes with sleep, sometimes with wine we
strive,

“ The cares of life, and troubles to deceive.”

Lib. ii. Sat. vii. 44.

But that is not to deceive the world, but to deceive ourselves, as Quintilian says, “ *vitam fallere*,” to draw on still, and amuse, and deceive our life, till it be advanced insensibly to the fatal period, and fall into that pit which nature hath prepared for it. The meaning of all this is no more than that most vulgar saying “ *Bene qui latuit, bene vixit*,” he has lived well who has lain well hidden. Which if it be a truth, the world (I will swear) is sufficiently deceived ; for my part I think it is, and that the pleasantest condition of life is in incognito. What a brave privilege is it, to be free from all contentions, from envying, or being envied, from receiving and from paying all kind of ceremonies ! It is in my mind a very delightful pastime, for two good and agreeable friends to travel up and down together, in places where they are by nobody known, nor know any body. It was the case of Æneas and his Achates, when they walked invisibly about the fields and streets of Carthage ; Venus herself,

A veil of thicken'd air around them cast,
That none might know, or see them as they past.
Virg. *Æn.* 1. v. 415.

The common story of Demosthenes confessing that he had taken great pleasure in hearing a woman say, as he passed "This is that Demosthenes," is wonderfully ridiculous from so solid an orator. I myself have often met with that temptation to vanity (if it were any); but I am so far from finding it any pleasure, that it only makes me run faster from the place, till I get out of sight. Democritus relates, and in such a manner as if he gloried in the good fortune and commodity of it, that when he came to Athens, nobody there did so much as take notice of him; and Epicurus lived there many years in his gardens, so famous since that time, with his friend Metradorus, after whose death, making in one of his letters a kind of commemoration of the happiness which they two had enjoyed together, he adds at last, that he thought it no disparagement to those great felicities of their life, that in the midst of the most talked of and talking country in the world, they had lived so long, not only without fame, but almost without being heard of. And yet within a very few years afterwards, there were no two names more known or more generally celebrated. If we engage into a large acquaintance and various familiarities, we set up our

gates to the invaders of most of our time, we expose our life to a quotidian ague of frigid impertinences, which would make a wise man tremble to think of. Now, as for being known much by sight and pointed at, I cannot comprehend the honour ; whatsoever it be, every mountebank has more of it than the best doctor, and the hangman more than the lord chief justice of a city. Every creature has it, both of nature and art, if it be any ways extraordinary. It is as often said " This is that Bucephalus," or " This is that Incitatus," when they were led prancing through the streets, as " This is that Alexander," or " This is that Domitian," and truly for the latter I take Incitatus to have been a much more honourable beast than his master, and more deserving the consulship than he the empire.

I love and commend a true good fame, because it is the shadow of virtue ; not that it does any good to the body which it accompanies, but it is an efficacious shadow, and like that of St. Peter cures the diseases of others. The best kind of glory, no doubt, is that which is reflected from honesty, such as was the glory of Cato and Aristides, but it was harmful to them both, and is seldom beneficial to any man while he lives ; what it is to him after his death, I cannot say ; because I love not philosophy merely notional and conjectural, and no man who has made the

experiment has been so kind as to come back to inform us.*

Upon the whole matter, I account a person who has a moderate mind and fortune, and lives in the conversation of two or three agreeable friends, with little commerce in the world besides, who is esteemed well enough by his few neighbours that know him, and is truly irreproachable by any body, and so after a healthful quiet life, before the inconveniences of old age, goes more silently out of it than he came in (for I would not have him so much as cry in the exit) this innocent deceiver of the world, as Horace calls him, this mute, I take to have been more happy in his part than the greatest actors that fill the stage with shew and bustle, nay even then Augustus himself, who asked, with his last breath, whether he had not played his farce very well.

“ Stet, quicumque volet potens

“ Aulæ carmine lubrico :

“ Me dulcis saturet quies.

* He means, to inform us whether posthumous fame contributes to make men happier in another life. He knew that honesty would turn to account there; but doubted whether the glory reflected from it on a good man's memory would be any ingredient in his future happiness. This doctrine he calls a philosophy merely notional and conjectural; not the doctrine of a future state, which no man believed with more assurance.
—Hurd.

"Obscuro positus loco,
 "Leni perfruar otio.
 "Nullis nota quiritibus
 "Ætas per tacitum fluat.
 "Sic cùm transierint mei
 "Nullo cum strepitu dies,
 "Plebeius moriar senex.
 "Illi mors gravis incubat,
 "Qui, notus nimis omnibus
 "Ignotus moritur sibi."

Seneca ex Thyeste, Act. ii. Chor.

"Upon the slippery tops of human state
 The gilded pinnacles of fate,
 Let others stand, and for a while
 The giddy danger to beguile,
 With joy and with disdain look down on all,
 Till their heads turn, and down they fall.
 Me, oh ye Gods, on earth, or else so near,
 That I no fall to earth may fear;
 And oh ye Gods, at a good distance seat,
 From the long ruins of the great.
 Here wrapt in the arms of quiet let me lie,
 Quiet, companion of obscurity.
 Here let my life with as much silence slide,
 As time, that measures it, does glide.
 Nor let the breath of i fame or fame,
 From town to town echo about my name;
 Nor let my homely death embroider'd be
 With scutcheon or with elegy.
 An old plebeian let me die,
 Alas, all men are such as well as I.
 To him, alas, to him I fear,
 The face of death will terrible appear,
 Who in his life flattering his senseless pride,
 By being known to all the world beside,
 Does not himself, when he is dying, know,
 Nor what he is, nor whither he's to go.

ESSAY 15.

COURAGE.

(Norris.)

ARISTOTLE in his morals begins the doctrine of virtues with courage, and has puzzled his interpreters to assign the reason of his method. But methinks, there is no great need to study or differ much about it. For certainly, among all the virtues, courage will justly challenge the precedency, and is the most cardinal and fundamental part of morality. This virtue is necessary, as a foundation for all the rest. For the very entrance into the school of wisdom and a virtuous course, is a state of discipline, difficulty, and hardship. And therefore it is, *sapere aude*, a great piece of daring and boldness to set up for a good man, especially if to the proper difficulties of a virtuous engagement we add those calamities and straits to which it often exposes us, through the malice and folly of the world. So that, as Plato wrote on his school,

Let none enter here that understands not mathematics,
it may be set as a motto upon the school of virtue,

Let none enter here that wants courage.

And as courage is necessary for the foundation of all other virtue, so it is their main support and guardian. Without this, let but a pistol be held to the breast, and the severest chastity will be frightened into compliance, the most heroic friendship into treachery, and the most ardent piety into renunciation of God and religion. There is nothing among all the frailties and uncertainties of this sublunary world so tottering and unstable as the virtue of a coward. He has that within him, which upon occasion will betray every virtue; and to secure him from sin, you must keep him from temptation.

Having now seen the usefulness of this great virtue, it will be proper to enquire a little into its nature. This is the more necessary, because it is not only variously and falsely comprehended by the many, but perhaps too confusedly and darkly described even by moralists themselves.

That which passes for courage with the vulgar is certainly nothing but stupidity, desperation, or fool-hardiness: a brutish sort of knight errantry in seeking out needless encounters, and running into dangers, without fear or wit, which is so far from having the chief property of courage, of being a guardian and security of our virtues, that it is in itself a sin.

Do moralists describe it better! They tell you that it is a mean between fear and rashness; but as they have never defined what this mean is,

you are as much at a loss as ever. Others may assert, that it is a firmness of mind in sustaining evils and encountering dangers, according to those two assigned parts of courage, *sustinere et aggredi*, to sustain and attack. But we are still unacquainted with what it is thus firmly to sustain or encounter, and where evils are to be thus sustained and encountered.

To settle therefore the point, I consider first, in general, that courage has the evil of pain for its object, which in some circumstances is to be chosen or submitted to. Hence I form this general idea of courage, that it is a firm and peremptory temper of mind to chuse the evil of pain in right circumstances, or when it is truly eligible.

We have now to ascertain where an evil is truly eligible, and we shall have an idea of courage sufficiently determinate. To make a thing eligible, it is necessary that some way or other it appear good, for evil itself under its proper form cannot be eligible, and to make an evil put on the appearance of good, two things are necessary: first, that it be a lesser evil than some other, and secondly, that the choice of it be the necessary means for avoiding that other. Then, and in no other case, is evil truly eligible; and consequently we shall not be mistaken in the idea of courage, if we define it to be such a firm and constant disposition of mind whereby a man is

fixed and determined never to dread any evil so far as to evade it, when the choice of such an evil is the only remedy against a greater. This is most eminently displayed in the case of martyrdom, when a man submits to the greatest evils of pain, to avoid the much greater of sin. This is the very summit and perfection of courage, which a Hannibal or a Scipio could never equal in their feats of war; and I dare affirm that he, who would rather die or relinquish any worldly interest than commit a sin, can never be a coward.

And here I cannot but notice a false notion of honour and courage, by which the world has been generally abused, especially those men who make the highest pretensions to both. According to their estimation, it is a sufficient reason to post a man up a coward if he declines a duel, and to merit a badge of honour from the Herald's office if he accepts it. These men would be ready to laugh at me, if I, as a lover of paradoxes, should tell them that their characters must be quite transposed to make them true. Yet so it is, that he who declines the duel, is the man of honour and courage; and he who accepts it is the coward. For he who declines it despises the obloquy and scorn of the world, that he may approve himself to God and his own conscience, and so chuses a lesser evil to avoid a greater. But he that accepts the duel so dreads the loss

of his credit among those whose good opinion is of no value, that to avoid it he chuses to incur sin, and the punishment of sin, and so encounters a greater evil to avoid a less. And if this be courage, we must strike it out of the catalogue of the virtues; for nothing is so that is not under the direction of prudence, much less what is mere folly and the very height of madness.

ESSAY 16.

SPLEEN.

(*Collier.*)

THE Spleen is oftentimes nothing but a nice and exceptionous temper, which takes offence at every little disappointment. It is often derived from a tincture of conceit; for those who overvalue their pretensions are apt upon every little occasion to think themselves ill used. You need not provoke their spirits by outrages either of fame or fortune, or by any injury of greater magnitude. A careless gesture, a look or a word, is enough to disconcert them. Such a supposed

neglect spreads a gloom upon their humours, renders them sullen and unsociable; and when they are disturbed only by their own weakness, and doing penance for their own vanity, they lay fault upon their constitution.

It is commonly said the Spleen is a wise disease, which, I believe, makes some fond of catching it, as possibly it may be their only symptom of sense. But if a man can shew his understanding in no better way than troubling himself and the company, let him, instead of pretending to sense, make it his business to be a fool. However, it must be granted that these fits of chagrin proceed sometimes from natural causes. The fumes of indigestion, sensible abatements of health, sudden changes of weather, affect the brain, though they make no sensible impression elsewhere. This disturbs the imagination, and gives a new and melaucholy complexion to the appearances of things.

When outward causes concur, the idle, the anxious, and the unfortunate are soonest seized by this infection. At such a time a man should awaken himself, and immediately engage in business or in some innocent diversion. Next to religion there is nothing like a vigorous mind. Resolution and spirit will quickly repel the malignity and dissipate the humour. Now every one is bound in honour as well as interest to do his best. For to lie at the command of so many

little accidents can be no pleasing discovery : to lose the comforts of life in a few vapours, and to be smoaked and smothered out of our reason are far from circumstances of credit. What wise man would bring the night-mare upon his fancy ; and conjure up apparitions to frighten himself ? Who would double his misfortunes and injure the habit of his body and mind if he could avoid it ? Evils of necessity are numerous enough without being multiplied by those of choice.

The way to prevent this distemper is not to be too sanguine in our expectations. Shall we take it amiss that our acquaintance are not always ready to solicit our business ; to study our inclinations, and to compliment our humour ? To look for so obliging a world as this, is to miscalculate extremely. When all is done most people will love themselves best. Therefore we should not be surprised to see them prefer their own interest, break a jest at our expence, or raise themselves by our depression. It is possible they may be only making reprisals and returning our own usage.

However, it is proper not to rely too much on the fairness of others ; more especially those who would live at ease must not be nice in trivial matters, nor insist upon punctualities in behaviour, nor be afflicted at the omission of a little ceremony. All do not like to be tied down to forms, nor to walk in trammels. He who values

regard needs not ask it of others, but may give it to himself when he pleases. These disputes commonly disorder none but weak and fantastic minds, who have taken a surfeit of prosperity; and since God has sent them no disappointments, are determined to make some out of their own indiscretion.

To conclude; he that would be happy should always put the best construction upon business and conversation. He should not suppose malice or contempt is meant in every action which he does not understand. To interpret thus will render him often mistaken and always uneasy; it is the way never to be kind to others nor just to himself.

ESSAY 17.

SOLITUDE.

(*Cowley.*)

“**NUNQUAM** minus solus, quam cūm solus,”
 “Never less alone than when alone,” is now become a vulgar saying, and quoted by every man, and almost every boy, for these seventeen hundred years. But it was at first spoken by the excellent Scipio, who was without doubt a most eloquent and witty person, as well as one of the most wise, most worthy, most happy, and greatest of mankind. His meaning no doubt was this, that he found more satisfaction to his mind, and more improvement by solitude than by company; and to shew that he spoke not this vainly or inconsiderately, after he had rendered Rome mistress of almost the whole world, he retired into voluntary exile, and, in a private house situated in the middle of a wood near Linternum, * passed the remainder of his glorious life no less glori-

* Seneca Epist. 86.

ously. This house Seneca visited long afterwards with great veneration, and among other things describes his baths of so mean a structure, that in his time the basest of the people would despise them, and cry out, "poor Scipio understood not how to live."

What an authority is here for the credit of a retreat! And happy had it been for Hannibal, if adversity could have taught him as much wisdom as was learnt by Scipio from the highest prosperities. This would be no wonder, if it were as truly as it is colourably and wittily said by Montagne, that ambition itself might teach us to love solitude; since nothing so much hates to have companions. It is true, ambition loves to have its elbows free, it detests to have company on either side; but it delights in a train behind, aye, and ushers too before it. But the greater part of men are so far from the opinion of the noble Roman, that if they chance at any time to be without company, they are like a becalmed ship, they never move except by the wind of other men's breath, and have no oars of their own to steer withal.

It is very fantastical and contradictory in human nature, that men should love themselves above all the rest of the world, and yet never endure to be with themselves. When they are

in love with a mistress all other persons are importunate and burthensome to them.

“*Tecum vivere amen tecum obeam lubens.*”

They would live and die with her alone.

“*Sic ego secretis possum bene vivere sylvis,*

“*Quà nulla humano sit via trita pede :*

“*Tu mihi curarum requies, tu nocte vel atrâ*

“*Lumen, et in solis, tu mihi turba locis.*

Tib. iv. 13.

“*With thee for ever I in woods could rest,*

“*Where never human foot the ground has prest :*

“*Thou from all shades the darkness can'st exclude,*

“*And from a desert banish solitude.*”

And yet our dear self is so wearisome to us that we can scarcely support its conversation for an hour together. This is such an odd temper of mind, as Catullus expresses towards one of his mistresses, whom we may suppose to have been of a very unsociable humour.

“*Odi et amo, quânam id faciam ratione requiris !*

“*Nescio, sed fieri sentio, et excrucior.*”

“*I hate, and yet I love thee too ;*

“*How can that be ? I do not know ;*

“*Only that so it is I know,*

“*And feel with torment that 'tis so.*”

This is a deplorable condition, and sometimes drives men to pitiful shifts, in seeking how to avoid themselves.

The truth is, that neither he who is a fop in

the world is fit to be alone ; nor he who has attached himself to the world, though he have never so much understanding : so that solitude can be well fitted and sit right upon few persons. They must have knowledge enough of the world to see the vanity of it, and enough virtue to despise all vanity. If our minds are possessed with violent passions, we had better be in a fair, than in a wood alone. For our passions may, like thieves, cheat us, and pick our pockets in the midst of company ; but like robbers they will strip and bind, or murder us, when they catch us alone. This is but to retreat from men and fall into the hands of devils. It is like the punishment of parricides among the Romans, to be sowed into a bag, with an ape, a dog, and a serpent.

The first work to make ourselves capable of enjoying the good of solitude is to eradicate all unruly passions ; for how is it possible to enjoy ourselves while our affections are tied to things without ? In the second place, we must learn the art and get the habit of thinking ; for this too, no less than well speaking, depends upon much practice ; and cogitation is the thing which distinguishes the solitude of a god from a wild beast. Now because the soul of man is not by its own nature or observation furnished with

sufficient materials to work upon, it must have continual recourse to learning and books for fresh supplies; so that the solitary life will become indigent and be ready to starve without them; but if once we be thoroughly engaged in the love of letters, instead of being wearied with the length of any day, we shall only complain of the shortness of our whole life.

"O vita, stulto longa, sapienti brevis."

O life, long to the fool, short to the wise!

The first minister of state has not so much business in public, as a wise man has in private; if the one have little leisure to be alone, the other has less leisure to be in company; the one has but part of the affairs of one nation, the other all the works of God and nature, under his consideration. No saying shocks me so much as that which I hear very often, "that a man does not know how to pass his time." It would have been but ill spoken by Methusalem in the nine hundred and sixty-ninth year of his life; so far it is from us, who have not time enough to attain the perfection of any part of any science, to have cause to complain that we are forced to be idle for want of work.

But this, you will say, is work only for the learned; others are not capable either of the em-

ployments or amusements that arise from letters. I know they are not ; and therefore cannot much recommend solitude to a man wholly illiterate. But if any man be so unlearned as to want entertainment in the little intervals of accidental solitude, which frequently occur in almost all conditions (except the very meanest of the people, who have business enough in the necessary provisions for life) it is truly a great shame both to his parents and himself. For a very small portion of any ingenious art will stop up all those gaps of our time; either music, or painting, or designing, or chemistry, or history, or gardening, or twenty other things, will do it usefully and pleasantly ; and if he happen to set his affections upon poetry (which I do not advise him too immoderately) that will over-do it. No wood will be thick enough to hide him from the importunities of company or business, which would abstract him from his beloved.

“ O quis me gelidis sub montibus Hæmi
 “ Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbrâ.*

1.

Hail, old patrician trees, so great and good !

Hail ye plebeian underwood !

Where the poetic birds rejoice,

And for their quiet nests and plenteous food

Pay, with their grateful voice.

* Virg. Georg. ii. 489.

2.

Hail, the poor Muses richest manor seat !
Ye country houses and retreat,
Which all the happy Gods so love,
That for you oft they quit their bright and great
Metropolis above.

3.

Here Nature does a house for me erect,
Nature the wisest architect,
Who those fond artists does despise,
That can the fair and living trees neglect ;
Yet the dead timber prize.

4.

Here let me, careless and unthoughtful lying,
Hear the soft winds, above me flying,
With all their wanton boughs dispute,
And the more tuneful birds to both replying,
Nor be myself, too, mute.

5.

A silver stream shall roll his waters near,
Gilt with the sun-beams here and there,
On whose enamell'd bank I'll walk,
And see how prettily they smile, and hear
How prettily they talk.

6.

Ah wretched and too solitary he,
Who loves not his own company !
He'll feel the weight oft many a day,
Unless he call in sin or vanity
To help to bear't away.

ESSAY 18.

OF NATURE IN MAN.

(Lord Bacon.)

NATURE is often hidden, sometimes overcome, seldom extinguished. Force makes nature more violent in the return; doctrine and discourse make nature less importune; but custom only alters and subdues nature. He that seeks victory over his nature, let him not set himself too great nor too small tasks; for the first will make him dejected by often failing, and the second will make him a bad proceeder by often prevailing. And at the first let him practise with helps, as swimmers do with bladders or rushes; but after a time let him practise with disadvantages, as dancers do with thick shoes: for it breeds great perfection, if the practice be harder than the use.

Where nature is mighty, and therefore the victory hard, the degrees must be, first to stay and arrest nature in time, like him, that would say over the four and twenty letters when he

was angry; then to go less in quantity, as if we should in drinking wine confine ourselves first to a draught at a meal; and lastly to discontinue altogether. But if a man have fortitude and resolution to enfranchise himself at once, that is the best.

Neither is the ancient rule amiss, to bend nature as a wand to a contrary extreme, in order to set it right, it being understood that the contrary extreme is no vice. Let no one force a habit on himself by perpetual continuance, but with some intermission: for the pause enforces the new onset; and if he who is not perfect be always in practice, he will practise his errors as well as his abilities, and establish one habit of both. There are no means to prevent this but by seasonable intermission.

But let no one trust his victory over his nature too far: for nature will lie buried for a long time, and yet revive upon a temptation. Like Æsop's damsel, turned from a cat into a woman, who sat very demurely at the table, till a mouse ran before her. Therefore either avoid the occasion altogether, or encounter it often, to be little moved by it.

A man's nature is best perceived in privacy; for there is no affectation in passion, which puts him out of his precepts, and in a new case of

experiment, for there custom forsakes him. Those are happy men whose natures sort with their vocations, otherwise they may say "my soul is a sojourner in a strange land," when they converse in those things which they do not affect.

In studies, whatsoever a man commands himself, let him set hours for it, but whatsoever is agreeable to his nature, let him take no care for any set times; for his thoughts will fly to it of themselves, so that the intervals of other business or studies will suffice. A man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore let him seasonably water the one and destroy the other.

 ESSAY 19.

 LIBERTY.

 (Lord Clarendon.)

LIBERTY is the charm, which mutinous and seditious persons use, to pervert and corrupt the affections of weak and wilful people, and to lead them into rebellion against their princes and lawful superiors: *En illa quam sæpe optastis libertas!* * said Cataline, when he would draw the people into a conspiracy against the commonwealth. And in that transportation, men are commonly so weak and wilful, that they insensibly submit to conditions of more restraint and compulsion, and in truth to more and heavier penalties for the vindication of their liberty, than they were ever liable to in the highest violation of their liberty of which they complain; by how much more the articles of war are more severe

* Behold that liberty which you have often courted.

and hard to be observed, than the strictest injunctions under any peaceable government.

However, no age has been without dismal and bloody examples of this fury, when the very sound of liberty, (which may be well called a charm) hath hurried those who sacrifice to it to do and to suffer all the acts of tyranny imaginable, and to make themselves slaves that they may be free. There is no one thing that the mind of man may lawfully desire and take delight in, that is less understood and more fatally mistaken, than the word liberty, which though none are so mad as to say, it consists in being absolved from all obligations of law, (which would give every man liberty to destroy his neighbour), yet they do in truth think it to be nothing else than not to be subject to those laws which restrain them.

Whoever is carried away upon that seditious invitation, has set his heart upon some liberty which he affects, a liberty for revenge, a liberty for rapine, or the like ; which if owned and gratified would seduce very few, but being concealed, all men gratify themselves with such an image of liberty as they respectively worship, and so concur together to overthrow the government that is inconvenient to them all, though disliked by very few in one and the same respect.

The strength of rebellion therefore consists in the private gloss which every man makes to himself upon the declared argument of it, not upon the reasons published and vowed, however specious and popular; and from thence it comes to pass, that most rebellions expire in a general detestation of their first promoters by those who kept them company in the prosecution, and discover their ends to be very different from their professions.*

True and precious liberty, which is only to be valued, is nothing else but that we may not be compelled to do any thing which the law has left in our choice, nor hindered from doing any thing which the law has given us liberty to do. Compulsion and force in either of these cases is an act of violence and injustice against our right, and ought to be repelled by the sovereign power, and may be resisted so far by ourselves as the law permits. This law is the standard and guardian of our liberty; it circumscribes and defends it; but to imagine liberty without a law, is to imagine every man with his sword in his hand to destroy him who is weaker than himself; no pleasant prospect even for those who

* This is a truth confirmed by the events of recent as well as past revolutions.

cry out most for liberty. Those men, however great their name and authority, who first advanced the opinion, that nature produced us in a state of war ; and that order and government were the effects of experience and contract, (by which man surrendered his natural right, to avoid that violence which every man might exercise upon another) have been the authors of much mischief in the world. They have infused into the hearts of mankind a wrong opinion of the institution of government ; as if it was lawful to exonerate themselves from the ill bargains that their ancestors made for that liberty which nature gave them ; and they ought only to have engaged their own interest and what concerned themselves ; but that it is most unreasonable and unjust to bind their posterity by their ill made and unskilful contracts.

From this resentment and murmur, war and rebellion have arisen, which commonly leave men under a condition worse than that to which they were subjugated by the compacts of their forefathers. Nor is it strange that philosophers who imagined that the world could be no otherwise made than by a lucky conjunction and convention of atoms, and could satisfy not their own curiosity in any rational conjecture on the origin of man, or from what omnipotency he could be

formed or created; I say it is no wonder that men so much in the dark as to matter of fact, should conceive by the light of their reason, that government arose in that method, and by those deductions which to them appeared most capable of producing such a conformity. But that those who are acquainted with the Scriptures, and profess to believe them; who thereby know the whole history of the creation, and have therein the most lively representations of all the excesses and defects of nature; who see the order and discipline and subjection prescribed to man from his creation, by his creator; that such men, after so clear information of what was really and in truth done and commanded, should resort to the fancy and supposition of heathen philosophers for the invention of government, is very unreasonable, and has exposed the peace and quiet of kingdoms, (the preservation of which is the obligation of conscience and religion) to the evil imaginations of men, upon the ungrounded conceptions concerning the primitive foundation of subjection and obedience.

ESSAY 20.

ON THE NATURE AND EFFECT OF POETRY.

(*Sir William Temple.*)

TO wisdom are attributed the inventions or productions of things generally esteemed the most necessary, useful, or profitable to human life, either in private possessions or public institutions; to genius those writings or discourses which are the most pleasing or entertaining to all that read or hear them. Yet, according to the opinion of those that link wisdom and genius together; as the inventions of sages and law-givers themselves do please and profit those who approve and follow them; so these of poets instruct and profit as well as please such as are conversant in them, and the happy mixture of both these makes the excellency in those compositions, and has given occasion or esteeming, or at least for calling poetry, *digne*.

The names given to poets both in Greek and Latin, express the same opinion of them in both those nations ; the Greek signifying makers or creators * ; such as raise admirable frames and fabrics out of nothing, which strike with wonder and with pleasure the eyes and imaginations of those who behold them ; the Latin makes the same word † common to poets and to prophets. Now, as creation is the first attribute and highest operation of divine power, so is prophecy the greatest emanation of divine spirit in the world. As the names in those two learned languages, so the causes of poetry are by the writers of them said to be divine, and to proceed from a celestial fire, or divine inspiration ; and by the vulgar opinions, recited or related to in many passages of these authors, the effects of poetry were likewise thought divine and supernatural, and power of charms and enchantments were ascribed to it.

“ Carmina vel cœlo possunt deducere Lunam,

“ Carminibus Circe socios mutavit Ulyssis ;

“ Frigidus in pratis cantando rumpitur anguis.”

Pale Phœbe, drawn by verse, from heaven descends ;
And Circe chang'd with charms Ulysses's friends.
Verse breaks the ground ; and penetrates the brake,
And in the winding cavern splits the snake.”

Dryden's Virgil, Pastoral 8. l. 95.

* *Poietes* from *ποιεω*, to make or do. † Poeta.

But I can easily admire poetry, and yet without adoring it; I can allow it to arise from the greatest excellency of natural temper, or the greatest race of native genius, without exceeding the reach of what is human, or giving it any approaches to divinity. I cannot allow poetry to be more divine in its effects than in its causes, nor any operation produced by it to be more than purely natural, or to deserve any other sort of wonder than those of music or of natural magic, however any of them may have appeared to minds little versed in the speculations of nature, of occult qualities, and the force of numbers or sounds.

When I read that charming description in Virgil's eighth Eclogue of all sorts of charms and fascinations by verses, by images, by knots, by numbers, by fire, by herbs, employed upon occasion of a violent passion, from a jealous or disappointed love; I have recourse to the strong impression, of fables and of poetry, to the easy mistakes of popular opinions, to the force of imagination to the secret virtues of several herbs, and to the powers of sounds. If the forsaken damsel in that Eclogue, had expected only from the force of her verses or her charms, what is the burthen of the song, to bring Daphnis home from the town where he was engaged in a new amour; if she

had pretended only to revive an old fainting flame, or to damp a new one that was kindling in his breast, she might for aught I know have compassed such ends by the power of enchantments. For true poetry may have the force to raise passions and to allay them, to change and to extinguish them, to tempt joy and grief, to raise love and fear, nay, to turn fear into boldness, and love into indifference, and into hatred itself; and I easily believe, that the disheartened Spartans were new animated, and recovered their lost courage by the songs of Tyrtæus; that the cruelty and revenge of Phalaris were changed by the Ode of Stesichorus into the greatest kindness and esteem; and that many men were as passionately enamoured by the charms of Sappho's wit and poetry, as by those of beauty in Flora or Thais: for not only beauty gives love, but love gives beauty to the object that raises it; and if the possession be strong enough, let it come from what it will, there is always beauty enough in the person that inspires it.

Nor is it any great wonder that such force should be found in poetry, since in it are assembled all the powers of eloquence, of music, and of painting, which are allowed to make so strong impression upon human minds. How far men have been affected with all or any of these

needs little proof or testimony. The examples have been known enough in Greece and in Italy, where some have fallen in love with the ravishing beauties of a lovely object drawn by the skill of an admirable painter, nay, painters themselves have fallen in love with some of their own productions, and doated on them as on a mistress or a fond child ; which distinguishes among the Italians the several pieces that are done by the same hand, into several degrees, of those made *con studio*, *con diligenza*, or *con amore*, whereof the last are ever the most excelling. The powers of music are either felt or known by all men, and are allowed to work strangely upon the mind and the body, the passions and the blood ; to raise joy and grief, to give pleasure and pain, to cure diseases, and the mortal sting of the tarantula ; to give motions to the feet as well as the heart, to compose disturbed thoughts, to assist and heighten devotion itself. We need no recourse to the fables of Orpheus or Amphion, or the force of their music upon fishes and beasts ; it is enough that we find the charming of serpents, and the cure or allay of an evil spirit or possession attributed to it in holy writ.

For the force of eloquence that so often raised and appeased the violence of popular commotions, and caused such convulsions in the Athe-

nian state, no man needs more to make him acknowledge it, than to consider Cæsar, one of the greatest and wisest of mortal men, come upon the tribunal full of hatred and revenge, and with a determined resolution to condemn Labienus, yet upon the force of Cicero's eloquence in an oration for his defence, begin to change countenance, turn pale, shake to that degree that the papers he held fell out of his hands, as if he had been frightened with words that never was so with blows, and at last change all his anger into clemency, and acquit the brave criminal instead of condemning him.

Now if the strength of these three mighty powers be united in poetry, we need not wonder that such virtues and such honours have been attributed to it, that it has been thought to be inspired, or has been called divine; and yet I think it will not be disputed that the force of genius and of reasoning, the height of conceptions and expressions may be found in poetry as well as in oratory, the life and spirit of representation as much as in painting, and the force of sounds as well as in music; and how far these three natural powers may extend, and to what effect, I leave it to such men to consider whose thoughts turn to such speculations as these, or who by their native temper and genius are in

some degree disposed to receive the impressions of them. For my part I do not wonder that the celebrated Dr. Harvey, when he was reading Virgil, should sometimes throw him down upon the table and say he had a devil; nor that the learned Meyric Casaubon, should find such charming pleasures and emotions as he describes upon reading some part of Lucretius; that so many should cry, and with downright tears, at some tragedies of Shakespear's; and so many more feel such turns or curdling of their blood, upon reading or hearing some excellent pieces of poetry; nor that Octavia fell into a swoon, at the recital made by Virgil of those verses in the sixth of his *Æneis*.

* He alludes to the beautiful passage on the death of Marcellus son of Octavia and nephew of Augustus.

“Tu Marcellus eris, &c.”

ESSAY 21.

ON THE POETIC SPIRIT.

(Sir William Temple.)

THE more true and natural source of poetry may be discovered, by observing to what god this inspiration was ascribed among the antients; namely, Apollo, or the sun, esteemed among them the god of learning in general, but more particularly of music and of poetry. The mystery of this fable means, I suppose, that a certain noble and vital heat of temper, but especially of the brain, is the true spring of these two parts or sciences: this was that celestial fire which gave such a pleasing motion and agitation to the minds of those men who have been so much admired in the world, that raises such infinite images of things so agreeable and delightful to mankind. By the influence of this sun are produced those golden and inexhausted mines of invention which has furnished the world with treasures so highly esteemed, and so universally known, and used in all the regions that have yet been discovered.

From this arises that elevation of genius which can never be produced by any art or study, by pains or by industry, which cannot be taught by precepts or examples; and therefore is agreed by all to be the pure and free gift of heaven or of nature, and a fire kindled out of some hidden spark of the very first conception.

But though invention be the mother of poetry, yet this child is, like all others, born naked, and must be nourished with care, clothed with exactness and elegance, educated with industry, instructed with art, improved by application, corrected with severity, and accomplished with labour and with time, before it arrives at any great perfection or growth. It is certain that no composition requires so many several ingredients, or of more different sorts; so many gifts of nature, and so many improvements of learning and of art. For there must be an universal genius, of great compass as well as great elevation. There must be a sprightly imagination or fancy, fertile in a thousand productions, ranging over infinite ground, piercing into every corner, and by the light of that true poetical fire, discovering a thousand little bodies or images in the world, and similitudes among them, unseen to common eyes, and which could not be discovered without the rays of the sun.

Besides the heat of invention and liveliness of wit, there must be the coldness of good sense and soundness of judgment, to distinguish between things and conceptions which at first sight or upon short glances seem alike; and to chuse among infinite productions of wit and fancy, which are worth preserving and cultivating, and which are better stifled in the birth, or thrown away when they are born, as not worth bringing up. Without the force of genius, all poetry is flat and languishing; without the succour of judgment it is wild and extravagant. The true wonder of poesy is that such contraries must meet to compose it; a genius both penetrating and solid; in expression, both delicacy and force; and the frame and fabric of a true poem must have something both sublime and just, amazing and agreeable. There must be a great agitation of mind to invent, a great calm to judge and correct; there must be upon the same tree, and at the same time, both flower and fruit. To work up this metal into exquisite figure, there must be employed the fire, the hammer, the chisel and the file. There must be a general knowledge of nature and of arts, and to go to the lowest that can be, there are required genius, judgment and application; for without this last, all the rest will not serve a turn, and none ever was a

great poet, that applied himself much to any thing else.

When I speak of poetry I mean not an ode or an elegy, a song or a satire; nor by a poet, the composer of any of these, but of a just poem; and after all I have said, it is no wonder there should be few that appeared in any parts or ages of the world, or that such as have, should be so much admired, and have almost divinity ascribed to them and to their works.

Whatever may have been the merits of those who are mentioned with so much admiration by the antients, but are lost to us, and unknown any further than their names, I think no man has been so bold among those that remain, to question the title of Homer and Virgil, not only to the first rank, but to the supreme dominion in this state, and from whom, as the great law-givers as well as princes, all the laws and orders of it, are, or may be derived. Homer was, without dispute, the most universal genius that has been known in the world, and Virgil the most accomplished. To the first must be allowed the most fertile invention, the richest vein, the most general knowledge, and the most lively expression: to the last, the noblest ideas, the justest institution, the wisest conduct, and the choicest elocution. To speak

in the painter's terms, we find in the works of Homer, the most spirit, force, and life ; in those of Virgil, the best design, the truest proportions and the greatest grace ; the colouring in both seems equal, and indeed is in both admirable. Homer had more fire and rapture, Virgil more light and swiftness ; or at least the poetical fire was more raging in one, but clearer in the other, which makes the first more amazing and the latter more agreeable. The ore was richer in one, but in the other more refined and better allayed to make up excellent work. Upon the whole, I think, it must be confessed, that Homer was of the two, and perhaps of all others, the vastest, the sublimest, and the most wonderful genius ; and that he has been generally so esteemed, there cannot be a greater testimony given, than what has been by some observed, that not only the greatest masters have found in his works the best and truest principles of all their sciences or arts, but that the noblest nations have derived from them their original, or their several races, though it be hardly yet agreed, whether his story be true or fiction. In short, these two immortal poets must be allowed to have so much excelled in their kinds, as to have exceeded all comparison, to have even extinguished emulation, and in a manner confined true poetry, not only to their

own languages, but to their very persons. And I am apt to believe so much of the true genius of poetry in general, and of its elevation in these two particulars, that I know not whether of all the numbers of mankind that live within the compass of a thousand years; for one man that is born capable of making such a poet as Homer or Virgil, there may not be a thousand born capable of making as great generals of armies, or ministers of state, as any the most renowned in story.

ESSAY 22.

OF THE VALUE OF LIFE.

(Collier.)

TO quarrel with the present state of mankind is an ungrateful reflection upon Providence. What if the offices of life are not so fine and great as we can fancy, they are certainly much better than we can challenge. What pretence could *nothing* have to insist upon articles! As long as the conveniences in being may, if we please, exceed the inconveniences, we ought to be thank-



ful ; for the overplus of the advantage is pure unmerited favour. He that repines because he is not more than man, deserves to be less ; and indeed the very complaint makes him so.

But the errors on this hand are not so common ; people are not so apt to be too big to live, as to be too little to die. They are much more frequently over-fond of the world, than ashamed of it. A perfect indifference, however, is not required. The laws of self-preservation, the long acquaintance of soul and body, the untried condition of a separation, and regard for our friends, are sufficient reasons not to turn our backs upon life out of an humour. Life was given for noble purposes, and therefore we must not part with it foolishly : it must not be thrown up in a pet, nor sacrificed to a quarrel, nor whined away in love. Pride, and passion, and discontent, are dangerous diseases. We are enlisted under Providence, and must wait till the discharge comes. To desert our colours would be of more than mortal consequences ; he that goes into the other world before he is sent for will meet with no good welcome.

On the other side we may be too backward as well as too forward in resigning. Life may be overvalued as well as things ; and he that buys it at the expence of duty purchases too dear.

Some people seem resolved to spin out life as long as they can; they are anxious to live to the utmost extent of nature; and will not venture a single pulse upon any consideration. But to dote upon breathing, for it is little more, at this rate, is to turn slave to all sorts of meanness and vice. Alarm such an one but with the fear of death, and you may make him say or do what you please, however infamous or ridiculous. And if his cowardice is not tried thus far, yet this base principle will keep him servile and insignificant. He will never touch a great proposal, nor risk any generous hazard for his friends or country. And is it worth while thus to value life above the ends and purposes of living? The resolution of Pompey was much more becoming, who being dissuaded by some of his attendants from embarking because the weather was tempestuous, replied, "say no more, my voyage is necessary, my life is not so."

The true estimate of life is not to be taken from age but action. A man may die old at thirty, and a child at fourscore. To nurse up the vital flame as long as the matter will last, is not always good husbandry. It is much better to cover it with an extinguisher of honour, than let it consume till it burns blue, and lies agonising in the socket; and at length goes out in no

perfume. If the sun were not to rise again, methinks it would look grander to tumble from the sky at noon, with all his light and heat, than to gain a course of four or five hours only to languish and decline.

When a noble occasion presents, an occasion that will bear a cool debate, and stand the test of reason, and may be pleaded to advantage in the other world; when a man is called upon to offer up himself to his conscience, and to resign to justice and truth; in such a case, instead of avoiding the lists, he should rather enter with inclination, and thank God for the honour of the opportunity. He should then be more solicitous about his behaviour than his life. Then,

Fortem posce animum et mortis terrore carentem *.

Let him pray for resolution to act up to the height of the occasion. That he may discover nothing of meanness or disorder: nothing that may discredit the cause, tarnish the glory, and weaken the example of the suffering.

There are some opportunities of going out of the world, which are well worth one's while to come in for. The last act of life is sometimes like the last number in a sum, ten times greater than all the rest. To slip the market when we

* Let him ask a strong mind, exempted from the fear of death.

are thus fairly offered, is great imprudence especially considering we must part with the thing afterwards for less.

But is it not a sad thing to fall thus suddenly into the grave? to be well one minute and dead the next? Not at all. If we are prepared, the shorter the voyage the better. Is it not more eligible to come in with a smooth gale than to be tossed at sea with a storm; and then thrown on a shore when the vessel is wrecked? Is it so desirable a condition to run through a long course of pain, and consume by inches, and lose our blood by drops? A death-bed figure is certainly the most humbling sight to the world. To set in so dark a cloud, and to go off with languor, convulsions and deformity, is a terrible rebuke to the dignity of human nature. Besides, people are frightened by phantoms of their own raising, and imposed on by words and things ill joined together. A natural death is generally the most violent; martyrdom does the business more gently than a disease. He that can conquer his imagination, may possibly die easier of a faggot than of a fever; and had better chuse to have the fire kindled without than within him.

To say that flesh and blood cannot be reconciled to this, is a mistake. People have sometimes too much courage this way. How often

does revenge, and poverty, and disappointment, make men force their passage into another state ? A slave has spirit enough to kill himself; and he that is not master of his liberty, will be master of his life. There is no age or sex, no passion or condition so dispirited and low, but affords instances of the contempt of death. The old Goths, from whom our Saxon ancestors probably descended, were so hardy, that it was part of their discipline and religion to scorn their lives : if they were afraid of any thing, it was of dying in their beds.

In the time of Alexander, the Indian philosophers, when weary of living, used to lie down upon their funeral pile without any visible concern. And Lucian mentions one Peregrinus, who jumped into a fiery furnace at the Olympic games, only to shew the company how far his vanity could carry him. At this day the Indian women offer themselves to the flames at the death of their husbands. I need not mention the primitive christians, whose fortitude was both general and extraordinary ; insomuch that Lactantius and others observed, that the women and children did not shew the least sign of complaint either in look, voice or motion, when they seemed to lie under the extremity of torture.

The way to acquire a contempt of death effectually is to live well. There is no such bravery as that of a good christian. He that can look the other world in the face needs fear nothing. But as to the courage of bullies and town sparks, who are so hardy as to risk body and soul, upon a point of pretended honour, there is no language which can reach their extravagance: they are distempered beyond the lunacy of Bedlam, and should be taken care of accordingly.

ESSAY 23.

SOCIAL AFFECTIONS.

(Lord Shaftesbury.)

IT is a common saying that interest governs the world. But I believe, whoever looks narrowly into the affairs of it will find that passion, humour, caprice, zeal, faction, and a thousand other springs, which are counter to self interest, have a considerable part in the movement of

this machine. There are more wheels and counterpoises in this engine than are easily imagined. It is of too complex a kind to fall under one simple view, or be explained thus briefly in a word or two. The studiers of this mechanism must have a very partial eye to overlook all other motions besides those of the lowest and narrowest compass. It is hard that in the plan or description of this clockwork no wheel or balance should be allowed on the side of the better and more enlarged affections; that nothing should be understood to be done in kindness or generosity; nothing in pure good nature or friendship, or through any social or natural affection of any kind: when perhaps the main springs of this machine will be found to be either those very natural affections themselves, or a compound kind derived from them, and retaining more than one half of their nature.

But here it must not be expected that I should draw up a formal scheme of the passions, or pretend to shew their genealogy and relation, how they are interwoven with one another, or interfere with our happiness and interest. It would be beyond the genius and compass of an essay, to frame a just plan or model; by which the proportion which the friendly and natural affections bear to each other in this order of ar-

chitecture, might be shewn. Modern projectors I know would willingly rid their hands of these natural materials; and would fain build after a more uniform way. They would new frame the human heart; and have a mighty fancy to reduce all its motions, balances, and weights to that one principle, a cool and deliberate selfishness. Men, it seems, are unwilling to think they can be so outwitted and imposed on by nature, as to be made to serve her purposes rather than their own: They are ashamed to be drawn thus out of themselves, and forced from what they esteem their true interest.

There has been at all times a sort of narrow-minded philosophers, who have thought to set this difference to rights by conquering nature in themselves. A primitive father, and founder* among these saw well this power of nature, and understood it so far that he earnestly exhorted his followers neither to beget children nor serve their country.

“Tu Pater, et rerum inventor! Tu patria nobis

“Suppeditas præcepta!”†

There was no dealing with nature, it seems, while these alluring objects stood in the way. Relations, friends, countrymen, laws, politic constitutions, the beauty of order and government,

* Epicurus.

† Lucretius, lib. 3.

and the interest of society and mankind, were objects which he well saw would naturally raise a stronger affection than any which was grounded upon the narrow bottom of mere SELF. His advice therefore, not to marry, nor engage in public concerns was wise, and suitable to his design. There was no way to be truly a disciple of this philosophy, but to leave family, friends, country, and society, to cleave to it. And in good earnest, who would not, if it were happiness to do so? The philosopher, however, was kind in telling us his thought. It was a token of his fatherly love of mankind.

But the revivers of this philosophy in latter days, appear to be of a lower genius. They seem to have understood less of this force of nature, and thought to alter the thing by shifting a name. They would so explain all the social passions and natural affections, as to denominate them of the selfish kind. Thus civility, hospitality, humanity towards strangers, or people in distress, is only a more deliberate selfishness. An honest heart is only a more cunning one; and honesty and good nature a more deliberate or better regulated self-love. The love of kindred, children, and posterity, is purely love of one's self, and of one's own immediate blood; as if by this reckoning all mankind were not included,

all being of one blood and joined by intermarriages and alliances, as they have been transplanted in colonies and mixed one with another. And thus love of one's country, and love of mankind, must be also self-love. Magnanimity, and courage, no doubt, are modifications of this universal self-love. For courage (says our modern philosopher*) is constant anger; and all men (says a witty poet†) would be cowards if they durst.

That the poet and the philosopher both were cowards, may be yielded perhaps without dispute. They may have spoken to the best of their knowledge. But for true courage, it has so little to do with anger, that there lies always the strongest suspicion against it when this passion is highest. The true courage is cool and calm. The bravest of men have the least of a brutal, bullying insolence, and in the very time of danger are found to be the most serene, pleasant, and free. Rage, we know, can make a coward forget himself and fight. But what is done in fury or anger, can never be placed to the account of courage.

* Sudden courage, says Hobbes (Lev. ch. 6.) is anger. Therefore courage, considered as constant, must, in his account, be defined constant anger, or anger constantly returning.

† Lord Rochester's Satire against Man.

Other authors there have been of a yet inferior kind; a sort of distributors and party retailers of this wit, who have run changes and divisions without end upon this article of Self-love. You have the very same thought spun out an hundred ways, and drawn into mottos and devices to set forth this riddle; they say "act as generously and disinterestedly as you please, self is still at the bottom, and nothing else." Now if these gentlemen who delight so much in the play of words, but are cautious how they grapple closely with definitions, would tell us only what self interest was, and determine happiness and good, there would be an end of this enigmatical wit. For in this we should agree, that happiness was to be pursued, and in fact was always sought after: but whether found in following nature, and giving way to common affection, or in suppressing it, and turning every passion towards private advantage, a narrow self end, or the preservation of mere life; this would be the matter in debate between us. The question would not be "Who loved himself or who not, but who loved and served himself after the rightest and the truest manner.

It is the height of wisdom no doubt to be rightly selfish; and to value life, as far as life is good, belongs as much to courage as to discre-

tion. But a wretched life is no wise man's wish. To be without honesty is in effect to be without natural affection, or sociableness of any kind. And a life without natural affection, friendship, or sociableness, would be found a wretched one, were it to be tried. It is, as these feelings and affections are intrinsically valuable and worthy, that self-interest is to be rated and esteemed. A man is by nothing so much himself as by his temper, and the character of his passions and affections. If he loses what is manly and worthy in these, he is as much lost to himself as when he loses his memory and understanding. The least step into villainy or baseness changes the character and value of life. He who would preserve life at any rate must abase himself worse than any one else can abase him. And if life be not a dear thing indeed, he who has refused to live a villain, and has preferred death to a base action, has been a gainer by the bargain.

ESSAY 24.

OF CONJUGAL LOVE.

(From The Museum.)

AN AFFECTING STORY.

OF all the pleasures that endear human life, there are none more worthy the attention of a rational creature than those that flow from the mutual return of conjugal love. Our great poet Milton, after describing the nuptial bower of Adam and Eve in Paradise, thus apostrophises that blissful state.

“ Hail, wedded love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise, of all things common else !
By thee adulterous lust was driv’n from men,
Among the bestial herds to range : by thee,
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of Father, Son, and Brother first were known

*

Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets !—

*

Here love his golden shafts employs ; here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings.”

When the fatal time of parting was come, they embraced with the utmost grief, and the warmest prayers to Heaven for the safety of each other. As soon as this afflicting scene was over, Marini embarked, and having a fair wind, arrived safe at Bastia in a few hours. The progress of the insurrection being checked and the affairs of the island settled, our lover prepared for his return; but as he was walking one day by the harbour where the ships of burthen lay, he heard two sailors who were just arrived, talking of the death of a Genoese nobleman's wife, then absent from the republic. This casual circumstance greatly alarmed him, and roused his curiosity to listen further to their conversation, when after a little pause he heard one of them mention the name of his dear Monimia. At these words his surprise and affliction were so great that he had not power to follow the mariners to satisfy his doubt, but swooned away, and when he recovered found himself surrounded by his lamenting servants.

While this happened to Marini, something of the same nature equally distressed Monimia; for an imperfect report came to Genoa by the captain of a Venetian vessel, that a gentleman named Marini, had been surprised and killed by a desultory party of the rebels. These two ac-

counts involved the unfortunate pair in the deepest affliction ; they immediately took shipping to be convinced of what they so much dreaded to know; the one for Corsica, the other for Genoa. A violent storm arose, which drove both their vessels upon a little island in the Mediterranean. Marini's ship landed first, when, while the crew were refreshing themselves, the inconsolable widower, as he deemed himself, wandered into a little wood near the shore to indulge his grief. Soon afterwards the Genoese ship reached the land, and the same motive led Monimia, with one of her maids, to the place where her husband was bewailing his loss. They heard each other's complaint, and drew nearer mutually to see a wretch whom they deemed more miserable than themselves. But how great was the astonishment of both, when they met in a little path, and saw each other. So great and sudden was the transition from misery to joy, that they fell into each others arms, and expired in a few minutes. Their bodies were conveyed to Italy, and interred in the same vault with all the solemnity and magnificence due to their quality and eminent virtue.

ESSAY 25.

ON THE CHARACTERS OF OUR GREAT DRAMATIC POETS.

(*Dryden.*)

SHAKESPEARE was the man who of all modern and perhaps antient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously but luckily: when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him of wanting learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned, he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature, he looked inwards and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid: his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swell-

ing into bombast. But he is always great when some great occasion is presented to him ; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets

*Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.**

Virgil's Eclogues.

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eton say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever wrote but he could produce it much better done in Shakespeare ; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him, Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem : and in the last king's court, when Ben's reputation was at the highest, sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakespeare far above him.

Beaumont and Fletcher, of whom I am next to speak, had, with the advantage of Shakespeare's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts improved by study ; Beaumont, especially, being so accurate a judge of plays, that Ben Jonson while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and it is thought used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his

* As cypresses above the humble shrubs.

plots. What value he had for him appears by the verses he wrote to him, and therefore I need speak no farther of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem was their *Philaster*; for before that they had written two or three very unsuccessfully, as the like is reported of Ben Jonson, before he wrote *Every Man in his Humour*. Their plots were generally more regular than Shakespeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death; and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better, whose wild debaucheries and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet before them could paint as they have done. Humour, which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe: they represented all the passions very lively, but, above all, love. I am inclined to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection; what words have been since taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage; two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's*: the reason is, because there is a certain

* The reader will recollect that this essay was written in the latter end of the reign of Charles the second, when it was the fashion to admire and imitate the

gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suits generally with all men's humours. Shakespeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs.

As for Jonson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself, (for his last plays were but his dotages) I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say that he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit, and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was wanting to the drama till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You

regularity and taste of the French drama. Hence the plays of our immortal bard, who so boldly broke through the unities of time and place; and whose wit though natural was uncultivated, were less esteemed than the more regular and studied productions of his cotemporary dramatists. A great revolution has since taken place in the national taste, and the plays of Shakespeare have experienced such great and deserved approbation, that they have almost totally superseded those which divided with them the public applause in the time of Dryden.

seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions, his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he came after those who performed both to such a height. Humour was his proper sphere, and in that he delighted most to represent mechanics.

He was deeply conversant in the antients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them : there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in Sejanus and Cataline. But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch, and what would be theft in other poets, 'is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, it was that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his comedies especially : perhaps too he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them : wherein, though he learnedly followed their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours.

If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit*. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets, Jonson the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare. To conclude of him; as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his Discoveries, we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any with which the French can furnish us.

* Wit, in the time of Dryden, was often used for genius.

ESSAY 26.

SERIOUSNESS.

(*Norris.*)

SINCE I began to consider so far as to make reflections upon myself, the most early and prevailing disposition which I observed, was an inclination to seriousness. And since I considered the nature of things, and the circumstances of human life, I found I had reason to thank the kind influence of my birth, for making that my temper, which otherwise I must have been at more cost to acquire.

For though it be generally reckoned only as a semi-virtue, and by some as no virtue at all, yet certainly nothing is of greater advantage, both as to intellectual and moral attainments, than to be of a serious, composed, and collected spirit. If it be not itself a virtue, it is at least the soil in which the virtues naturally grow, and the most visible mark whereby to know those who are vir-

tuous. This is that which distinguishes a man from a child, and a wise man from a fool. For as the son of Sirach observes, "A man may be known by his look, and one that has understanding by his countenance when thou meetest him." And again, "A fool lifts up his voice with laughter, but a wise man does scarce smile a little."

There is indeed a near relation between seriousness and wisdom, and one is the most excellent friend to the other. A man of a serious, sedate, and considerate temper, as he is always in a ready disposition for meditation (the best improvement both of knowledge and manners) so he thinks without disturbance, and enters not upon a second notion, till he is master of the first. Whereas a man of a loose, volatile, and shattered humour, thinks only by fits and starts, when the serious mood comes upon him; and even then too, if the least trifle cross his way, his desultory fancy takes the scent, leaves the unfinished and half mangled notion, and skips away in pursuit of the new game.

Indeed, nothing excellent can be done without seriousness; and he that courts wisdom must be in earnest. For to pretend to arrange a reasonable system of thoughts with an unsettled head, is as ridiculous as to think of writing straight

in a jumbling coach, or to draw an exact picture with a palsied hand. Nay, he that will hit his mark, must have a steady hand as well as a quick eye ; and he that will think to any purpose, must have a fixed and composed temper, as well as quick parts.

Accordingly we find that those among the philosophic sects, who professed extraordinary eminence in wisdom or virtue, assumed also a peculiar gravity of habit, and solemnity of behaviour ; and the most sacred and mysterious rites of religion were usually performed with silence, and that not only for decency, but for advantage. Thus the Italians, with gravity of behaviour, are also remarkable for uncommon politeness and ingenuity, especially for poetry, music, and painting, things which depend not only upon strength of imagination, but require also great justness of thought, and exactness of judgment. And it is a known observation of Aristotle concerning melancholy, that it promotes contemplation, and makes great wits. Thus again the discipline of silence was a considerable part of the Pythagoric institution.

But because a solemn deportment may sometimes disguise an unthinking mind, and grave, in some mens dictionaries, signifies the same as dull, I shall define more closely wherein the true idea

of seriousness consists, or what it is to be in good earnest a serious man ; and we may distinguish seriousness from these qualities, which, resembling it in appearance, prove often the cause of error and confusion.

It does not consist in the moroseness of a cynic, nor in the severity of an hermit, nor in the demureness of affected precision ; it is neither in a drooping head, nor a mortified face, nor a primitive beard. It is something very different and more excellent than this, which must compose a serious man. And I believe, I shall not misrepresent him, if I say, he is one who duly and impartially weighs the value of things, so as neither to esteem trifles, nor despise things really excellent ; who dwells much at home, and studies to know himself as well as books or men : who considers why he came into the world, how great his business, how short his stay, and how uncertain the time when he shall leave it : in a word, who knows how to distinguish between a moment and eternity.

This is to be truly serious, and however the pretender to gaiety and levity of humour, may miscall and ridicule it by the names of melancholy, dullness, and stupidity ; he that is thus disposed, cannot fail of being wise and good here, and happy hereafter.

Some writers in casting up the goods most desirable in life, have given them this rank, health, beauty and riches. Of the first I find no dispute, but to the two others much may be said: for beauty is a good that makes others happy rather than one's self; and how riches should claim so high a rank, I cannot tell, when so great, so wise, and so good a part of mankind, have in all ages preferred poverty before them. The Therapeutæ and Ebionites among the Jews, the primitive monks and modern friars among the Christians, so many dervises among the Mahometans, the Brachmans among the Indians, and all the antient philosophers, who, whatever else they differed in, agreed in this of despising riches, and at best esteeming them an unnecessary trouble or incumbrance of life. So that whether they are to be reckoned among goods or evils, is yet left in doubt.

When I was young and in some idle company, it was proposed, that every one should tell what his three wishes should be, if they were sure to be granted. Some were very pleasant, and some very extravagant; mine were health, and peace, and fair weather, which though out of the way among young men, yet perhaps might pass well enough among old. They are all of a strain; for health in the body

know, yet I may perhaps give them the occasion to consider more than they do.

This is a sort of instruction that no man can dislike, since it comes from himself, and is made without envy or fear, constraint or obligation, which makes us commonly dislike what is taught us by others. All men would be glad to be their own masters, and should not be sorry to be their own scholars, when they pay no more for their learning, than for their own thoughts, which they have commonly more store of about them, than they know what to do with; and which if they do not apply to something of good use, nor employ about something of ill, they will trifle away upon something vain or impertinent; their thoughts will be but waking dreams, as their dreams are sleeping thoughts. Yet of all sorts of instructions, the best is gained from our own thoughts as well as experience: for though a man may grow learned by other men's thoughts, yet he will grow wise or happy only by his own; the use of other men's towards these ends, is but to serve for our own reflections, otherwise they are but like meat swallowed down for pleasure or greediness, which only charges the stomach, or fumes into the brain, if it be not well digested, and thereby turned into the very mass or substance of the body that receives it.

can do the meanest, the worst, and most criminal of his subjects.

To know that the passions or distempers of the mind make our lives unhappy, in spite of all accidents and favours of fortune, a man perhaps must be a philosopher, and requires much thought and study, and deep reflections. To be a stoic, and grow insensible of pain, as well as poverty or disgrace, one must be perhaps something more or less than a man, renounce common nature, oppose common truth and constant experience. But there needs little learning or study, more than common thought and observation, to find out that ill health loses not only the enjoyments of fortune, but the pleasures of sense, and even of imagination, and hinders the common operations both of mind and body, from being easy and free.

Let philosophers reason and differ about the chief good or happiness of man; let them find it where they can, and place it where they please; but there is no mistake so gross, or opinion so impertinent, (how common soever) as to think pleasures arise from what is without us, rather than from what is within; from the impression given us of objects, rather than from the disposition of the organs that receive them. The various effects of the same objects upon different

persons, or upon the same persons at different times, make the contrary most evident. Some distempers make things look yellow, others double what we see, the commonest alter our tastes and our smells, and the very foulness of ears changes sounds. The difference of tempers, as well as of age, may have the same effects, by the many degrees of perfection or imperfection in our original tempers, as well as of strength or decay, from the differences of health and of years. From all which it is easy, without being a great naturalist, to conclude, that our perceptions are formed, and our imaginations raised upon them, in a very great measure, by the dispositions of the organs through which the several objects make their impressions; and that these vary according to the different frame and temper of the others, as the sound of the same breath passing through an oaten pipe, a flute, or a trumpet.

But to leave philosophy, and return to health. Whatever is true concerning the dependence of happiness upon the temper of the mind, it is certain that pleasures depend upon the temper of the body, and that to enjoy them, a man must be well with himself, as the vessel must be sound to have your wine sweet; for otherwise, let it be never so pleasant and generous, it loses the

taste; and pour in never so much, it all turns sour, and were better to let alone. Whoever will eat well, must have a stomach; who will relish the pleasure of wine, must have his mouth in taste; nay, to find any felicity, or take any pleasure, in the greatest advantages of honour and fortune, a man must be in health. Who would not be covetous, and with reason, if this could be purchased with gold? Who not ambitious, if it were at the command of power, or restored by honour. But alas! a white staff will not help gouty feet to walk better than a common cane; nor a blue ribband bind up a wound so well as a fillet. The glitter of gold, or of diamonds, will but hurt sore eyes, instead of curing them; and an aching head will be no more eased by wearing a crown, than a common night cap.

The two great blessings of life, are, in my opinion, health and good humour; and none contribute more to one another. Without health, all will allow life to be but a burthen; and the several conditions of fortune, all wearisome, dull, or disagreeable, without good humour. Nor does any seem to contribute towards the true happiness of life, but as it serves to increase that treasure, or to preserve it. Whatever other differences are commonly appre-

hended in the several conditions of fortune, none perhaps will be found so true, or so great, as what is made by those two circumstances, so little regarded in the common course or pursuits of mortal men.

Whether long life be a blessing or no, God only can determine, who alone knows what length it is like to run, and how it is like to be attended. Socrates used to say, it was pleasant to grow old with good health and a good friend; and he might have reason. A man may be content to live, while he is no trouble to himself, or his friends; but after that, it is hard if he be not content to die. I knew, and esteemed a person abroad, who used to say, a man must be a mean wretch, that desired to live beyond the age of threescore. But so much I doubt is certain, that in life as in wine, he that will drink it good, must not draw it to the dregs.

When this happens, one comfort of age may be, that whereas younger men are usually in pain, when they are not in pleasure; old men find a sort of pleasure, whenever they are out of pain. And as young men often lose, or impair their present enjoyments, by raving after what is to come, by vain hopes or fruitless fears; so old men relieve the wants of their age, by pleasing reflection upon what is past. Therefore men in

the health and vigour of their age, should endeavour to fill their minds with reading, with travel, with the best conversation, and with the worthiest actions, either in their public or private stations; that they may have something agreeable left to feed on when they are old, by pleasing remembrances.

But as those are only clean beasts which chew the cud when they have fed enough, so they must be clean and virtuous men, that can reflect with pleasure upon the past accidents and courses of their lives. Besides, men who grow old with good sense, a good fortune, and good nature, cannot want the pleasure of pleasing others, by assisting with their gifts, their credit, their advice, such as deserve; as well as their care of children, kindness to friends, and bounty to servants.

But there cannot, indeed, live a more unhappy creature, than an ill natured old man, who is neither capable of receiving pleasures, nor sensible of doing them to others.

ESSAY 28.

IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

(*Norris.*)

TO be careful how we manage and employ time, is one of the first precepts that is taught in the school of wisdom, and one of the last that is learnt. The first and leading dictate of prudence is, to propose to ourselves our true and best interest as our end; and the next is, to make use of all the means and opportunities by which that end is to be attained. And betwixt these two there is such a close connection, that he who does not do the latter, cannot be supposed to intend the former. He that is not careful of his actions shall never persuade me that he seriously proposes to himself his best interest as his end; for if he did, he would as seriously apply himself to the regulation of the other as the means: so he that is not careful of his time, cannot in reason be supposed to be careful of his actions,

for if he were, he would certainly have a special regard to the opportunity of their performance.

But though this precept be one of the elementary dictates of prudence, and stands written in the first page of the book of wisdom ; yet such is the sottishness and stupidity of the world, that none is more slowly learned. And it is a stupendous consideration, that although among all the talents which are committed to our stewardship, Time on several accounts is the most precious ; yet there is none of which the generality of men are more profuse and regardless. Though it be a thing of such inestimable value that it is not distributed to use entirely and alone, like other blessings ; but is dealt out in minutes and little parcels, as if we were not fit to be trusted with the entire possession of such a choice treasure ; yet there are many who think themselves so overstocked with it, that instead of husbanding it to advantage, the principal business of their thoughts is how to rid their hands of it. Accordingly they catch at every shadow and opportunity of relief ; strike in at a venture with the next companion, and provided the dead commodity be taken off, care not who is the chapman. Nay, it is obvious, that even those who are frugal and thrifty in every thing else, are yet extremely prodigal of their best revenue, Time, of

“ which alone (as Seneca well observes) it is a virtue to be covetous.”

Neither may this censure be justly applied to the unthinking multitude, the sphere of whose consideration is supposed to be very narrow, and their apprehension short-sighted ; but I observe, that many of those who set up for wits, and pretend to more than ordinary sagacity, and delicacy of sense, do, notwithstanding, spend their time very unaccountably, and live away whole days, weeks, and sometimes months together, to as little purpose (though it may not be so innocently) as if they had been asleep. And this they are so far from being ashamed to own, that they freely boast of it, and pride themselves in it, thinking that it tends to their reputation, and commends the greatness of their parts ; that they can support themselves upon the natural stock, without being beholden to the interest that is brought in by study and industry.

But if their parts be so good as they would have others believe, sure they are worth improvement ; if not, they have more need of it. And though it be an argument of a rich mind to be able to maintain itself without labour, and subsist without the advantages of study, yet there is no man that has such a portion of sense but will

understand the use of his time better than to put it to the trial.

Greatness of parts is so far from being an exemption from industry, that I find men of the most exquisite sense in all ages were always most sparing of their time. I therefore much suspect the excellency of those men's parts who are dissolute and careless mis-spenders of their time.

He who considers these things (and surely he must needs be a very unthinking man who does not) will certainly be choice of his time, and look upon it no longer as a bare state of duration, but as an opportunity; and consequently will let no part, or at least no considerable part, of it slip away either unobserved or unimproved. This is the most effectual way to secure the character of a wise man here, and the reward of one hereafter. Whereas the vain enthusiastic pretenders to the gift of wit, that trifle away their time, betray the shallowness and poverty of their sense to the discerning few.

ESSAY 29.

TASTE.

(*Burke.*)

A RECTITUDE of judgment in the arts, which may be called a good taste, in a great measure depends on sensibility; because if the mind has no bent to the pleasures of the imagination, it will never apply itself sufficiently to works of that species to acquire a competent knowledge in them. But though a degree of sensibility is requisite to form a good judgment, yet a good judgment does not necessarily arise from a quick sensibility of pleasure. On the contrary, it frequently happens that a very poor judge, merely by force of a greater complexional sensibility, is more affected by a very poor piece, than the best judge by the most perfect; for as every thing new, extraordinary, grand or passionate, is well calculated to affect such a person, and that the faults do not affect him, his plea-

sure is more pure and unmixed: and as it is merely a pleasure of the imagination, it is much higher than any which is derived from a rectitude of the judgment.

The judgment is for the greater part employed in throwing stumbling blocks in the way of the imagination, in dissipating the scenes of its enchantment, and in tying us down to the disagreeable yoke of our reason; for almost the only pleasure that men have in judging better than others, consists in a sort of conscious pride and superiority, which arises from thinking rightly; but then this is an indirect pleasure, a pleasure which does not immediately result from the object which is under contemplation. In the morning of our days, when the senses are unworn and tender, the whole man is awake in every part, and the gloss of novelty fresh upon all the objects that surround us. How lively at that time are our sensations, but how false and inaccurate the judgments we form of things! I despair of ever receiving the same degree of pleasure from the most excellent performances of genius, which I felt at that age from pieces which my present judgment regards as trifling and contemptible. Every trivial cause of pleasure is apt to affect the man of too sanguine a complexion: his appetite is too keen to suffer

his taste to be delicate : and he is in all respects what Ovid says of himself in love,

“ Molle meum levibus cor est violabile telis,
“ Et semper causa est, cur ego semper amem.”

My heart is easily pierced by the slightest darts,
And I always find a reason for love.

One of this character can never be a refined judge ; never what the comic poet calls *elegans formarum spectator*. The excellence and force of a composition must always be imperfectly estimated from its effects on the minds of any, except we know the temper and character of those minds. The most powerful effects of poetry and music have been displayed, and perhaps are still displayed, where these arts are but in a very low and imperfect state. The rude hearer is affected by the principles which operate in these arts even in their rudest condition ; and he is not skilful enough to perceive the defects. But as arts advance towards their perfection, the science of criticism advances with equal pace, and the pleasure of judges is frequently interrupted by the faults which are discovered in the most finished compositions.

Before I leave this subject, I cannot help taking notice of an opinion which many persons entertain, as if the taste were a separate faculty

of the mind, and distinct from the judgment and imagination ; a species of instinct by which we are struck naturally, and at the first glance, without any previous reasoning, with the excellencies or defects of a composition. So far as the imagination and the passions are concerned, I believe it true that the reason is little consulted ; but where disposition, where decorum, where congruity are concerned, in short, where the best taste differs from the worst, I am convinced that the understanding operates, and nothing else ; and its operation is in reality far from being always sudden, or when it is sudden, it is often far from being right. Men of the best taste by consideration frequently change these early and precipitate judgments, which the mind from its aversion to neutrality and doubt, loves to form on the spot.

It is known that the taste (whatever it is) is improved exactly as we improve our judgment, by extending our knowledge, by a steady attention to our object, and by frequent exercise. They who have not taken these methods, if their taste decides quickly, it is always uncertainly ; and their quickness is owing to their presumption and rashness, and not to any hidden irradiation that in a moment dispels all darkness from their minds.

But they, who have cultivated that species of knowledge which makes the object of taste, by degrees and habitually, attain not only a soundness but a readiness of judgment, as men do by the same methods on all other occasions. At first they are obliged to spell, but at last they read with ease and with celerity; yet this celerity of its operation is no proof that the taste is a distinct faculty. Nobody, I believe, has attended the course of a discussion, which turned upon matters within the sphere of mere naked reason, but must have observed the extreme readiness with which the whole process of the argument is carried on, the grounds discovered, the objections raised and answered, and the conclusions drawn from premises, with a quickness altogether as great as the taste can be supposed to work with; and yet where nothing but plain reason either is or can be suspected to operate. To multiply principles for every different appearance is useless, and unphilosophical too, in a high degree.

ESSAY 30.

ON THE DIFFERENT CHARACTERS OF
MANKIND.

(Melmoth.)

POPE lays it down as a maxim, that

“The proper study of mankind is man.”

There cannot indeed be a more useful, nor perhaps a more easy science; so many lessons of this kind are every moment forcing themselves upon our observation, that it should seem scarce possible not to be well acquainted with the various turns and dispositions of the human heart. And yet there are so few who are really adepts in this article, that to say of a man *he knows the world*, is generally esteemed a compliment of the most significant kind.

The reason, perhaps, of the general ignorance which prevails in this sort of knowledge, may arise from our judging too much by universal principles. Whereas there is a wonderful disparity in mankind, and numberless characters

exist which cannot properly be reduced to any regular and fixed standard. Pascal observes, that the greater sagacity any man possesses, the more originals he will discern among his species; as it is the remark of Sir William Temple, that no nation under the sun abounds with so many as our own. Plutarch is of opinion, that there is a wider difference between individuals of our own kind, than what is observable between creatures of a separate order; while Montagne (who seems to have known human nature perfectly well), supposes the distance to be still more remote, and asserts, that the distinction is much greater betwixt man and man, than between man and beast.

The comic writers have not, perhaps, taken all the advantage they might of this diversity of humour in the human race. A judicious observer of the world might single out abundant materials for ridicule, without having recourse to those worn-out characters which are for ever returning upon the stage. If I were acquainted with any genius in this class of writers, I think I could furnish him with an original, which, if artfully represented and connected with proper incidents, might be very successfully introduced into comedy. The person I have in view, is my neighbour Stipotes.

Stitotes, in his youth, was esteemed to have good sense, and a tolerable taste for letters; as he gained some reputation at the university in the usual exercises. But as soon as he was freed from the restraint of his tutors, the natural restlessness of his temper broke out, and he has never from that time to this, applied himself for half an hour together to any single pursuit. He is extremely active in his disposition, but his whole life is one incessant whirl of trifles. He rises, perhaps, with a full intent of amusing himself all the morning with his gun; but before he has got half the length of a field, he recollects that he owes a visit, which he must instantly pay; accordingly, his horse is saddled, and he sets out. But, in his way, he remembers, that he has not given proper orders about such a flower, and he must absolutely return, or the whole economy of his garden will be ruined. Thus in whatever action you find him engaged, you may be sure it is the very reverse of what he proposed. Yet with all this quickness of transition and vivacity of spirits, he is so indolent in every thing that has the air of business, that he is at least two or three months before he can persuade himself to open any letter he receives: and from the same disposition, he has suffered the dividends of his stocks to run on for many

years, without receiving a shilling of the interest.

Stitotes is possessed of an estate in Dorsetshire, but that being the place where his chief business lies, he chuses constantly to reside with a friend near London. This person submits to his humour and his company, in hopes that Stitotes will consider him in his will ; but it is more than possible, that he will never endure the fatigue of signing one. However, having here every thing provided for him but clothes and pocket money, he lives perfectly to his own satisfaction, in full employment without any real business ; and while those who look after his estate, take care to supply him with sufficient to answer those two articles, he is entirely unconcerned as to the rest ; though when he is disposed to appear more than ordinarily important, he will gravely harangue upon the roguery of stewards, and complain that his rents will scarce maintain him in powder and shot half the partridge season. In short, Stitotes is one of the most extraordinary compounds of indolence and activity ever observed.

ESSAY 31.

*AGAINST DESPAIR.**(Collier.)*

THE trouble of Despair always rises in proportion to the evil that is feared. By consequence the greatest agonies of expectation are those which relate to another world. But I shall leave this consideration to the pulpit, and proceed upon a lower object.

Now, Despair, as it respects the business and events of life, is an uneasy and impolitic passion. It antedates a misfortune, and torments us before our time. It spreads a gloominess upon the soul, and makes her live in a dungeon beyond the notion of pre-existence. It preys upon the vitals like the vulture of Prometheus. It cramps the powers of nature, and gives being to many cross accidents which otherwise would never happen. To believe a business impossible, is the way to make it so. How many feasible projects have miscarried by despondency, and been strangled in the birth by a cowardly imagination?

Can we foresee the utmost limits of nature? And are we acquainted with all the powers in being? Is it an easy matter to pronounce upon all the alterations of time and accident? Is Despair so entertaining a companion? Are the pleasures of it so inviting and so rapturous? Should we exert our sagacity to torment ourselves, and let slip no opportunity of being unhappy? As long as there is life there is hope; and if so, it is prudence not to desert it. Hope is a vigorous principle; it is furnished with light and heat, to advise and execute. It sets the head and the heart at work, and animates us to do our utmost. And thus by perpetual pushing and assurance, it puts a difficulty out of countenance, and makes a seeming impossibility give way. At the worst, if the success happens to fail, it is clear gains as long as it lasts. It keeps the mind easy, and expecting; and fences off anxiety and spleen. It is sometimes so sprightly and profitable a quality, that the pleasure of expectation exceeds that of fruition. It refines upon the richness of nature, and paints beyond the life; and when the reality is thus outshone by the imagination, success is a kind of disappointment; and to hope, is better than to have. Besides, hope has a creditable complexion: it throws a generous contempt upon ill usage, and looks

like a handsome defiance of a misfortune ; as if we should say, you are somewhat troublesome, but I shall conquer you hereafter. Thus a man makes an honourable exit, if he does nothing farther.

But Despair makes a despicable figure, and descends from a mean origin. It is the offspring of fear, of laziness, and impatience. It argues a defect of spirits and resolution, and sometimes of honesty too. After all, the exercise of this passion is so troublesome, that methinks nothing but dint of evidence and demonstration should force it upon us. I would not despair, unless I knew the irrevocable decree was past ; unless I saw my misfortune recorded in the book of fate, and signed and sealed by necessity. Indeed where the act is unmanly, or the expectation immoral, or contradictory to the attributes of God, we ought to drop our hopes, or rather never to entertain them. And therefore I would neither hope to play the fool or the knave, or be immoral ; but when the object is defensible and fair, I would not quit my hold as long as it was within the reach of possibility.

Let no man therefore disquiet himself too much about the future, nor quit a just undertaking from despondency. Honest people ought to be cheerful, if only for the credit of their virtue.

Let us not grow melancholy upon a superficial view of things ; for that is as far as we can discover. It is much better to act our own parts carefully, and leave the event with the Almighty.

ESSAY 32.

POPULAR DISCONTENTS.

(Sir William Temple.)

THERE is no theme so large and easy, no discourse so common, and so plausible, as the faults or corruptions of governments, the miscarriages or complaints of magistrates ; none so easily received, and spread among good and well-meaning men ; none so mischievously raised and employed by ill, nor turned to worse and more disguised ends. No governments, no times were ever free from them, nor ever will be till all men are wise, good, and easily contented. No civil or political constitutions can be perfect or secure, while they are composed of men, that are

for the most part passionate, interested, unjust or unthinking, but generally and naturally restless and unquiet; discontented with the present, and what they have, raving after the future, or something they want, and thereby ever disposed and desirous to change.

This makes the first and universal default of all governments; and this made the philosophers of old, instead of seeking or accepting the public magistracies, or offices of their countries, employ their time and care to improve men's reasons, to temper their affections, to allay their passions, to discover the vanity or the mischief of pride and ambition, of riches, and of luxury; believing the only way to make their countries happy and safe, was to make men wise and good, just and reasonable. But as nature will ever be too strong for art, so these excellent men succeeded as little in their design, as lawgivers have done in the frame of any perfect government; and all of them left the world much as they found it, ever unquiet, subject to changes and revolutions, as our minds are to discontents, and our bodies to diseases.

Another cause of distempers in states, and discontents under all governments, is the unequal condition that must necessarily fall to the share of so many, and so different men that compose

them. In great multitudes, few in comparison are born to great titles, or great estates; few can be called to public charges, and employments of dignity or power; few by their industry and conduct, arrive at great degrees of wealth and fortune, and every man speaks of the fair, according to his own market. All are easily satisfied with themselves and their own merit, though they are not so with their fortune; and when they see others in better condition, whom they esteem less deserving, they lay it upon the ill constitution of government, the partiality or humour of princes, the negligence or corruption of ministers.

The common people always find fault with the times, and some must always have reason; for the merchant gains by peace, and the soldier by war; the shepherd by wet seasons, and the ploughman by dry; when the city fills, the country grows empty, and while trade increases in one place, it decays in another. In such variety of conditions and courses of life, men's designs and interests must be very opposite one to another, and both cannot succeed alike. Whether the winner laugh or no, the loser will complain, and rather than quarrel at his own skill or fortune, will do it with the dice, or those he plays with, or the master of the house. When any body is angry, some body must be in fault; and

the faults of seasons which cannot be remedied, of accidents that could not be prevented, of mis-carriages that could not be foreseen, are often laid upon the government, and, whether right or wrong, have the same effect of raising or increasing the popular discontents.

Besides the natural propensity, and inevitable occasions of complaint from the dispositions of men, or accidents of fortune, others proceed from the very nature of government. None was ever perfect, or free from very many, and just exceptions. The Republics of Athens, Carthage, and Rome, so renowned in the world, and which have furnished story with the greatest actions and persons upon the records of time, were but long courses of disorder and vicissitude, perpetually rolling between the oppression of the nobles, the seditions of the people, the violence of soldiers, or the tyranny of commanders. All places and ages of the world yield the same examples; and if we travel as far as China and Peru, we meet with no one that has not been subject to the same concussions, and fallen at some time or other, under the same convulsions of state, either by civil dissensions, or by foreign invasions.

But how can it otherwise happen when the very ideas of government have been liable to exceptions, as well as their actual frames and con-

stitutions? The Republic of Plato, the principality of Hobbes, the Rotation of Oceana*, have been all indicted, and found guilty of many faults, or of great infirmities. Nay, the very kinds of government have never yet been out of dispute, but equal faults have by some or other been laid to the charge of them all. An absolute monarchy ruins the people; a limited one endangers the prince; an aristocracy is subject to the emulation of the great, and oppressions of the meaner sort; a democracy to popular tumults and convulsions; and as tyranny commonly ends in popular tumults, so do these often in tyranny, whilst factions are so violent that they will trust any thing else rather than one another. So that a perfect scheme of government, seems as endless and useless a search, as that of the universal medicine or the philosophers' stone, never any of them out of our fancy, never any like to be in our possession.

Could we even suppose a body politic, framed perfect in its first conception or institution, yet it must fall into decays, not only from the force of accidents, but even from the very rust of time, and at certain periods, must be furbished up, or reduced to its first principles, by the ap-

* Alluding to Harrington's treatise on government.

pearance and exercise of some great virtues, or some great severities. This the Florentines in their Republic termed, *Ripigliare il Stato*; and the Romans often attempted by introducing Agrarian laws, but could never achieve it; they rather inflamed their dissensions by new feuds between the richer and poorer sort.

This one universal division in all states, which is, between the innocent and criminal: and another between such as are in some measure contented with what they possess by inheritance, or what they expect from their own abilities, industry, or parsimony; and others, who, dissatisfied with what they have, and not trusting to those innocent ways of acquiring more, must fall to others, and pass from just to unjust, from peaceable to violent. The first desire safety, and to keep what they have; the second are content with dangers, in hopes to get what others legally possess; one loves the present state and government, and endeavours to secure it, and the other desires to end this game, and shuffle for a new one: one loves fixed laws, and the other arbitrary power; yet the last, when they have gained enough by factions and disorders, by rapine and violence, then change their principles with their fortunes, and grow friends to established orders and fixed laws. So the

Normans of old, when they had divided the spoils of the English lands and possessions, grew bold defenders of the antient Saxon customs, or common laws of the kingdom, against the encroachments of their own kings. So of later days, it was observed that Cromwell's officers in the army, who were at first for burning all records, for levelling lands while they had none of their own; yet when afterwards they were grown rich and landed men, they fell into the praise of the English laws, and cried up Magna Charta, as our ancestors had done with much better grace.

But laws serve to keep men in order, when they are first well agreed and instituted, and afterwards continue to be well executed. Discontents, disorders, and civil dissensions, much more frequently arise from want or miscarriage in the latter, than in the former. Some excellent law-giver or senate, may invent and frame some excellent constitution of government; but none can provide, that all magistrates or officers necessary to conduct or support it, shall be wise men or good, or if they are both, shall have such care and industry, such application and vigour as their offices require. Now were the constitution of any government never so perfect, the laws never so just; yet if the administration be ill, ignorant, or corrupt, too rigid, or too remiss,

too negligent, or too severe, there will be more just occasions given of discontent and complaint, than from any weakness or fault in the original conception or institution of government. For it may perhaps be concluded, with as much reason as other themes of the like nature, that those are generally the best governments, where the best men govern; and let the sort or scheme be what it will, those are ill governments, where ill men govern, and are generally employed in the offices of state. Yet this is an evil, to which all things under the sun are subject; not only by accident, but even by natural dispositions, which can hardly be altered.

How can a prince always chuse well such as he employs, when men's dispositions are so easily mistaken, and their abilities too? How deceitful are appearances! How false are their professions! How hidden are their hearts! How disguised their principles! How uncertain their humours! Many men are good and esteemed when they are private, ill and hated when they are in office; honest and contented when they are poor, covetous and violent when they grow rich. They are bold one day, and cautious another; active at one time of their lives, and lazy the rest; sometimes pursue their ambition, and sometimes their pleasure; nay, among soldiers,

some are brave one day, and cowards another, as great captains have told me on their own experience and observation. Gravity often passes for wisdom, wit for ability; what men say for what they think, and boldness of talk for boldness of heart; yet they are often found to be very different. Nothing is so easily cheated, or so commonly mistaken, as vulgar opinion; and many men *come out*, when they *come into* great and public employments, the weakness of whose heads or hearts would never have been discovered, if they had kept within their private spheres of life.

Besides, princes or states cannot run into every corner of their dominions, to look out persons fit for their service, or that of the public: they cannot see far with their own eyes, nor hear with their own ears, and must, for the most part, do both with those of other men, or else chuse among such smaller numbers as are most in their way; and these are such generally, as make their court or give their attendance, in order to advance themselves to honours, to fortunes, to places and employments; and are usually the least worthy of them, and better servants to themselves than to the government. The greedy, the ambitious, the half-witted, the proud, the covetous, are ever restless to get into public

employments, and many others that are uneasy, or ill entertained at home. The forward, the busy, the bold, the sufficient, pursue their game with more passion, endeavour, and application, and thereby often succeed when better men would fail.

In the course of my observation I have found no talent of so much advantage among men, towards their growing great or rich, as a violent and restless passion and pursuit for one or the other, and whoever sets his heart and his thoughts wholly upon some one thing, must have very little wit, or very little luck to fail. Yet all these cover their ends with most worthy pretences, and those noble sayings, that men are not born for themselves, and must sacrifice their lives for the public, as well as their time and their health. In the mean time the noble, the wise, the rich, those that are easy in their conditions, or their minds, those who know most of the world, and of themselves, are not only careless, but often averse from entering into public charges or employments, unless upon the necessities of their country, commands of their prince, or instances of their friends. What is to be done in this case, when such as offer themselves, and pursue, are not worth having, and such are more worthy, will neither offer, nor perhaps accept ?

There is one difficulty more, which sometimes arrives like an ill season or great barrenness of a country: Some ages produce many great men, and few great occasions; other times, on the contrary, rain great occasions, and few or no great men. And that sometimes happens to a country, which was said by the fool of Bredevode, who going about the fields with the motions of one sowing corn, was asked what he sowed? He said, "I sow fools;" the other replied, "why do you not sow wise men?" "Why," said the fool, "*c'est que la terre ne les porte pas.*" In some times and places, the races of men may be so decayed, by the infirmities of birth itself, by the diseases or disaffection of parents; may be so depraved by the viciousness or negligence of education, by licentious customs, and luxuries of youth, by ill examples of princes, parents, and magistrates, or corrupt principles, generally infused and received among a people, that it may be hard for the best princes or ministers to find subjects fit for the command of armies, or great charges of the state; and if these are ill supplied, there will be always too just occasion for exception and complaints against the government, though it be never so well framed and instituted.

These defects and infirmities, either natural or accidental, make way for another, which is more

artificial, but of all others the most dangerous: For when, upon any of these occasions, complaints and discontents are sown among well-meaning men, they are sure to be cultivated by others that are ill and interested, who cover their own ends under those of the public, and by the good and service of the nation, mean nothing but their own. The practice begins of knaves upon fools, of artificial and crafty men upon the simple and the good; these easily follow, and are caught, while the others lay trains, and pursue a game wherein they design no other share than of toil and danger to their company, but the game and the quarry wholly to themselves.

They blow up sparks that fall in by chance, or could not be avoided; or else throw them in whenever they find the stubble is dry: they find out miscarriages where they are, and forge them often where they are not; they quarrel first with the officers, and then with the prince or state; sometimes with the execution of the laws, and at others with the institutions, how antient and sacred soever. They make fears pass for dangers, and appearances for truth; represent misfortunes for faults, and molehills for mountains; and by the persuasions of the vulgar, and pretences of patriots, or lovers of their country, at the same

time they undermine the credit and authority of the government, and set up their own. This raises a faction between those subjects that would support it, and those that would ruin it; or rather between those that possess the honour and advantages of it, and those that, under pretence of reforming, design only to change the hands it is in, and care little what becomes of the rest.

When, therefore, the fire is kindled, both sides inflame it; all care of the public is laid aside, and nothing is pursued but the interest of the factions; all regard of merit is lost in persons employed, and those only chosen, that are true to the party; and all the talent required is, to be hot, to be heady, to be violent on one side, or the other. When these storms are raised, the wise and good are either disgraced or laid aside, or retire of themselves, and leave the scene free to such as are most eager, or most active to get upon the stage, or find men ready to help them up.

From these seeds grow popular commotions, and at last seditions, which so often end in some fatal periods of the best governments, in strong convulsions and revolutions of state; many times make way for new institutions and forms, never intended by those who first began or promoted them; and often terminate

either in setting up some tyranny at home, or bringing in some conquest from abroad. For the animosities and hatred of the factious grow so great that they will submit to any power, the most arbitrary and foreign, rather than yield to an opposite party at home; and are of the mind of a great man, in one of our neighbouring countries, who upon such a conjunction, said, if he must be eaten up, he would rather it should be by wolves than by rats.

It imports little, from what poor small springs the torrents of faction first arise, if they are fed with care, and improved by industry, and meet with dispositions fitted to embrace and receive them. But whatever the beginnings of factions are, the consequences are the same, and the ends too of those chiefly engaged in them, which is to act the same part in different masks, and to pursue private passions or interests under public pretences.

Upon the survey of these dispositions in mankind, and the conditions of government, it seems much more reasonable to pity than to envy the fortunes and dignities of princes, or great ministers of state; and to lessen or excuse their venial faults, or at least their misfortunes, rather than to increase them, or make them worse by ill colours and representations. For as every prince

should govern as he would desire to be governed, if he were a subject, so every subject should obey as he would desire to be obeyed, if he were a prince; since this moral principle of doing as you would be done by, is certainly the most undisputed and universally allowed of any other in the world, how ill soever it may be practised by particular men.

It would be hard to leave princes and states with so ill prospects and presages of ease or success in the administration of their governments, as these reflections must afford them; and therefore I will not end this Essay, without some offer at their safety, by fixing some marks like lights upon a coast, by which their ship may avoid at least known rocks or sands, where wrecks or dangers have been usually observed; for to those that come from Heaven by storms, or the fatal periods decreed above, all the world must submit.

The first safety of princes and states lies in avoiding all councils or designs of innovation in antient and established forms and laws, especially those concerning liberty, property, and religion, (which are the possessions men will ever have most at heart,) and thereby leaving the channel of known and common justice clear and undisturbed.

The second, in pursuing the true and common interest of the nation they govern, without espousing those of any party or faction ; or if these are so formed in a state, that they must incline to one or other, then to chuse and favour that which is most popular, or wherein the greatest or strongest part of the people appear to be engaged. For as the end of government seems to be the *salus populi*, (welfare of the people), so the strength of government is the consent of the people ; which made that maxim of *vox populi, vox Dei*, (the voice of the people, the voice of God). That is, the governors, who are few, will ever be forced to follow the strength of the governed, who are many, let them be either people or armies, by which they govern.

A third, is to countenance and introduce, as far as is possible, the customs and habits of industry and parsimony into the countries they govern ; for frugal and industrious men are usually safe and friendly to the established government, as the idle and expensive are dangerous from their humours or necessities.

The last consists in preventing dangers from abroad, for foreign dangers raise fears at home ; and fears among the people, raise jealousies of the prince or state, and give them ill opinions, either of their abilities, or their good intentions.

Men are apt to think well of themselves and of their nation, of their courage and of their strength; and if they see it in danger, they lay the fault upon the weakness, ill conduct, or corruption of their governors; the ill orders of the state, ill choice of officers, or ill discipline of armies; and nothing makes a discontent or sedition so fatal at home, as an invasion, or the threats and prospect of one from abroad.

Upon these four wheels the chariot of state may in all appearance drive easy and safe, or at least not be too much shaken by the usual roughness of ways, unequal humours of men, or any common accidents. Farther is not to be provided; for though the beginnings of great fires are often discovered, and thereby others easily prevented with care, yet some may be thrown in from engines far off, and out of sight, others may fall from Heaven. In such cases, when the flame breaks out, all that can be done is to remove as fast as can be all materials that are like to increase it, and to employ all ways and methods of quenching it, to repair the breaches and losses it has occasioned, and to bear with patience what could not be avoided, or cannot be remedied.

ESSAY 33.

REMEDIES FOR
POPULAR DISCONTENTS.

(Sir Wm. Temple.)

I CANNOT leave this subject of Popular Discontents, without reflecting and bewailing, how much and how often our unfortunate country has been infested by them, and their fatal consequences in the miseries, and deplorable effects of so many foreign and civil wars as these have occasioned, and seem still to threaten. How often they have ruined or changed the crown: how much blood they have drawn of the bravest subjects: how much they have ravaged and defaced the noblest island of the world, and which seems from the happy situation, the temper of the climate, the fertility of soil, the numbers and native courage of the inhabitants, to have been destined by God and nature, for the greatest happiness and security at home, and to give

laws, or balance at least, to all their neighbours abroad.

These popular discontents, with the factions and dissensions they have raised, made way for the Roman, Saxon, and Norman conquests. These drew so much blood, and made so great desolations in the Barons' wars, during the reigns of several kings, till the time of Edward the Third, upon disputes between prerogative and liberty, or the rights of the crown, and those of the subject. These involved the nation in perpetual commotions or civil wars, from the reign of Richard the Second, to Henry the Seventh, upon disputes of right and title to the crown, between the two houses, or the races, of York and Lancaster, while the popular discontents made way for the succession of a new pretender, more than any regard of right or justice in their title, which served only to cover the bent and humour of the people to such a change.

In the time of Henry the Eighth began the differences of religion, which tore the nation into two mighty factions, and under the names of Papist and Protestant, struggled in their bowels with many various events, and many consequences; many fatal effects, and more fatal dangers, till the Spanish invasion in 1588. After which, the balance of the parties grew so unequal in

weight and number, as to calm and secure the rest of queen Elizabeth's time. Yet, before the end of her reign, began a new faction in the state to appear, and swell against the established government of the church, under pretence of a further reformation, after the examples of Geneva or Strasburgh, from whence the chief of this party, during the flight or banishment from the cruelties of queen Mary's reign, drew their protection and their opinions, in defiance of ecclesiastical powers and dignities, as well as several ceremonies, such as the surplice, the altar, and the cross, with others yet more indifferent.

This faction increased in number, and popular vogue or esteem, all the reign of king James; and seeming to look either dangerously or unkindly upon the crown, gave occasion to the court of endeavouring to introduce into the church and state some opinions the most contrary to those of the puritan or dissenting faction; as that of divine right, and thereby more arbitrary power in kings, and that of passive obedience in the subjects. These opinions or pretences divided the nation into parties, so equal in number or in strength, by the weight of the established government on the one hand, and the popular humour on the other, as produced those

long miseries, and fatal revolutions of the crown and nation, between 1641 and 1660, when his majesty's happy restoration seemed to have given a final period to all new commotions or revolutions in this kingdom, and to all discontents that were considerable enough to raise or foment any new divisions. How they have been since revived, and so well improved, for what ends, and with what consequences upon the safety, honour, and power of this kingdom, let those answer either to God or man, who have been the authors or promoters of them. It is enough for me to have endeavoured the union of my country, whilst I continued in public employments, and to have left the busy scene in the fullest career of favour and of fortune, rather than have any part in the divisions or factions of our nation, when I saw them grow incurable. A true and honest physician is excused for leaving his patient when he finds the disease grown desperate, and can by his attendance expect only to receive his own fees, without any hopes or appearance of deserving them, or contributing further to his health or recovery.

A weak or unequal faction, in any state, may serve, perhaps, to enliven or animate the vigour of a government; but when it grows equal, or nearly proportioned in strength or number, and

irreconcilable by the animosity of the parties, it cannot end without some violent crisis, and convulsion of the state; and hardly without some new revolution; and, perhaps, final ruin of the government, in case a foreign invasion enters upon the breaches of civil distractions.

But such fatal effects of popular discontents, either past or to come, in this floating island, will be a worthy subject of some better history than has been yet written of England. I shall here only regret one unhappy effect of our discontents and divisions, that will ever attend them, even when they are not violent or dangerous enough to disturb our peace, which is, that they divert our greatest councils from falling upon the consultations and pursuits of several acts and institutions which seem to be the most useful and necessary for the common interest and public good of the kingdom, without regard to any partialities which busy the counsels as well as actions of all factious times.

Now there are several acts and institutions, which are at least grounded upon the true, general, and perpetual interest of the nation, without any regards of parties and factions, of the necessities of particular times or occasions of government. And such constant interests of England there are, which last through all successions of

kings or revolutions of state. Of this kind, and the most general as well as most necessary, are the greatness of our naval forces, the balance of our neighbouring powers; and our own union by the extinction of factions among us. For our nation is too great, and too brave, to be ruined by any but itself; and if the number and weight of it roll one way upon the greatest changes that can happen, yet England will still be safe, which is the end of all public institutions, as it was of the Roman laws; *-Salus populi suprema lex esto*; "Let the public safety be the supreme law." To this, all differing opinions, passions, and interests should strike sail, and, like proud swelling streams, though running different courses, should yet make haste into the sea of common safety, from whence their springs are said to be derived, and which would otherwise overflow and lay waste the countries where they pass. Without this pretence, at least, no faction would ever swell so high as to endanger a state; for all of them gain their power and number to their party, by pretending to be derived from regards of common safety, and of tending towards it in the surest and directest course.

The comparison between a state and a ship has been so illustrated by poets and orators, that it is hard to find any point wherein they differ,

and yet they seem to do it in this; In great storms, and rough seas, if all the men and lading roll to one side, the ship will be in danger of oversetting by their weight. On the contrary, in storms of state, if the body of the people, with the bulk of estates, roll one way, the nation will be safe. When a ship goes to sea, bound to a certain port, with a great cargo, and a numerous crew, who have a share in the lading as well as safety of the vessel; let the weather and the gale be never so fair, yet, if the crew apprehend they see a breach of waters, which they are sure must come from rocks or sands that will endanger the ship unless the pilot change his course; if on the other hand, the captain, the master, the pilot, with some other of the officers, tell them they are fools or ignorant, and not fit to advise; that there is no danger, and it belongs to themselves to steer what course they please, or judge to be safe, and that the business of the crew is only to obey; if, however, the crew persist in their apprehensions of the danger, and the officers of the ship in the pursuit of their course, till the seamen will neither stand to the tackle, hand sails, or suffer the pilot to steer as he pleases: what can become of this ship? Either the crew must be convinced by the captain and officers of their skill and care, and safety of

their course, or these must comply with the common apprehensions and humours of the seamen, or else they will fall together by the ears, and so throw one another overboard, and leave the ship in the direction of the strongest, and perhaps to perish, in case of hard weather, for want of hands.

Just so in a state, divisions of opinion, though upon points of common interest or safety, yet, if pursued to the height, and with heat and obstinacy enough on both sides, must end in blows and civil arms, and by their success, leave all in the power of the strongest, rather than the wisest or the best intentioned, or, perhaps, expose it to the last calamity of a foreign conquest. But nothing besides the uniting of parties upon one common bottom, can save a state in a tempestuous season ; and every one, both of the officers and crew, is equally concerned in the safety of the ship as in their own, since, in that alone, theirs are involved.

ESSAY 34.

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

(Dryden.)

IT may be expected that having written the life of an historian (Plutarch), I should take occasion to write something concerning history itself ; but I think to commend it is unnecessary, for the profit and pleasure of that study are both so very obvious, that a quick reader will be before hand with me, and imagine faster than I can write. Besides that, the post is taken up already ; and few authors have travelled this way, but who have strewed it with rhetoric as they passed. For my own part, who must confess it to my shame, that I never read any thing but for pleasure, it has always been the most delightful entertainment of my life, but they who have employed the study of it as they ought, for their instruction, for the regulation of their private man-

ners, and the management of public affairs, must agree with me, that it is the most pleasant school of wisdom. It is a familiarity with past ages, and an acquaintance with all the heroes of them : it is a prospective glass, carrying your soul to a vast distance, and taking in the farthest objects of antiquity. It informs the understanding by the memory, it helps us to judge of what will happen, by shewing us the like revolutions of former times. For mankind being the same in all ages, agitated by the same passions, and moved to action by the same interests, nothing can come to pass, but some precedent of the like nature has already been produced, so that having the causes before our eyes, we cannot easily be deceived in the effects, if we have judgment enough but to draw the parallel.

God, it is true, with his divine providence, over-rules and guides all actions, to the secret end he has ordained them ; but in the way of human causes, a wise man may easily discern, that there is a natural connection betwixt them ; and though he cannot foresee accidents, or all things that possibly can come, he may apply examples, and by them foretell, that from the like counsels will probably succeed the like events ; and thereby in all concerns, and in all offices of life, be instructed in the two main

points on which depend our happiness, that is, what to avoid, and what to chuse.

The laws of history in general, are truth of matter, method, and clearness of expression. The first property is necessary, to keep our understanding from the impositions of falsehood; for history is an argument framed from many particular examples or inductions: if these examples are not true, then those measures of life which we take from them, will be false, and deceive us in their consequence. The second is grounded on the former; for if the method be confused, if the words or expressions of thought are in any way obscure, then the ideas which we receive must be imperfect, and if such, we are not taught by them what to elect, or what to shun. Truth, therefore, is required as the foundation of history, to inform us; disposition and perspicuity as the manner to inform us plainly; one is the being, the other is the well being of it.

History is principally divided into these three species, Commentaries or Annals; History, properly so called; and Biography, or the lives of particular men.

Commentaries, or Annals, are (as I may so call them) naked history, or the plain relation of matter of fact, according to the succession of time, divested of all other ornaments. The springs

and motives of actions are not here sought, unless they offer themselves, and are open to every man's discernment. The method is the most natural that can be imagined, depending only on the observation of months and years, and drawing in the order of them, whatsoever happened worthy of relation. The style is easy, simple, unforced, and unadorned with the pomp of figures; conceits, guesses, politic observations, sentences, and orations are avoided: in a word, a bare narration is its business. Of this kind, the Commentaries of Cæsar are certainly the most admirable, and after him the Annals of Tacitus may have place, nay even the prince of Greek historians, Thucydides, may almost be adopted into the number. For though he instructs every where by sentences, though he gives the causes of actions, the counsels of both parties, and makes orations where they are necessary; yet it is certain that he first designed his work a Commentary; every year writing down, like an unconcerned spectator, as he was, the particular occurrences of the time, in the order as they happened; and his eighth book is wholly written after the way of annals; though outliving the war, he inserted in others those ornaments, which render his work the most complete and most instructive extant.

History, properly so called, may be described by the addition of those parts which are not required to annals; and therefore there is little farther to be said concerning it: only that the dignity and gravity of stile is here necessary. That the guesses of secret causes inducing to the actions, be drawn at least from the most probable circumstances, not perverted by the malignity of the author, to sinister interpretations; (of which Tacitus is accused) but candidly laid down, and left to the judgment of the reader: that nothing of concernment be omitted, but things of trivial moment are still to be neglected, as debasing the majesty of the work; that neither partiality nor prejudice appear, but that truth may every where be sacred. "*Ne quid falsi dicere audeat, ne quid veri non audeat historicus*"*. That he neither incline to superstition, in giving too much credit to oracles, prophecies, divinations and prodigies, nor to irreligion, in disclaiming the Almighty providence; but where general opinion has prevailed of any miraculous accident or portent, he ought to relate it as such, without imposing his opinion on our belief.

Next to Thucydides, in this kind, may be reckoned Polybius, among the Greeks; Livy,

* The historian should not dare to tell a falsehood, or to conceal a truth. A maxim drawn from Tacitus.

thought not free from superstition, nor Tacitus from ill nature, among the Romans; amongst the modern Italians, Guicciardini and Davila, if not partial; but above all, in my opinion, the plain, sincere, unaffected, and most instructive Philip de Comines, among the French, though he only gives his history the humble name of *Commentaries*. I am sorry I cannot find in our own nation, though it has produced some commendable historians, any proper to be ranked with these. Buchanan, indeed, for the purity of his Latin, and for his learning, and for all other endowments belonging to an historian, might be placed among the greatest, if he had not too much leaned to prejudice, and too manifestly declared himself a party to a cause, rather than an historian. Excepting only that, (which I desire not to urge too far on so great a man, but only to give caution to his readers concerning it,) our isle may justly boast in him a writer comparable to any of the moderns, and excelled by few of the antients.

Biography, or the history of particular men's lives, comes next to be considered; which in dignity is inferior to the other two, as being more confined in action, and treating of wars and counsels, and all other public affairs of nations, only as they relate to him whose life is written,

or as his fortunes have a particular dependance on them, or connection with them. All things are here circumscribed and driven to a point, so as to terminate in one : consequently, if the action or counsel were managed by colleagues, some part of it must be either lame or wanting, except it be supplied by the excursion of the writer. Herein, likewise, must be less of variety for the same reason, for the fortune and actions of one man are related, not those of many. Thus the actions and achievements of Sylla, Lucullus, and Pompey, are all of them but the successive parts of the Mithridatic war ; of which we could have no perfect image, if the same hand had not given us the whole, though at several times, in their particular lives.

Yet though we allow, for the reasons above alledged, that this kind of writing is in dignity inferior to history and annals, in pleasure or instruction it equals or even excels both of them. It is not only commended by antient practice, to celebrate the memory of great and worthy men, as the best thanks which posterity can pay them ; but also the examples of virtue are of more vigour, when they are thus contracted into individuals. As the sun-beams united by a burning-glass into a point, have greater force than when they are darted from a plain superficies ; so the

virtues and actions of one man, drawn together into a single story, strike upon our minds a stronger and more lively impression, than the scattered relations of many men, and many actions; and by the same means that they give us pleasure, they afford us profit too. For when the understanding is intent, and fixed on a single thing, it carries closer to the mark, every part of the object sinks into it, and the soul receives it unmixed and whole. For this reason Aristotle commends the unity of action in a poem, because the mind is not capable of digesting many things at once, nor of conceiving fully any more than one idea at a time.

Whatsoever distracts the pleasure, lessens it; and as the reader is more concerned at one man's fortune, than those of many, so likewise the writer is more capable of making a perfect work, if he confine himself to this narrow compass. The lineaments, features, and colourings of a single piece, may be hit exactly; but in a history piece, of many figures, the general design, the ordonnance or disposition, the relation of one figure to another, the diversity of the postures, habits, shadowings, and all the other graces conspiring to an uniformity, are of so difficult performance, that neither is the resemblance of particular persons often perfect, nor the beauty of the piece

complete; for any considerable error in the parts, renders the whole disagreeable and lame.

Thus, then, the perfection of the work and the benefit arising from it, are both more absolute in biography than in history. All history is only the precepts of moral philosophy, reduced into examples. Moral philosophy is divided into two parts, ethics, and politics; the first instructs us in our private offices of virtue, the second in those which relate to the management of the commonwealth. Both of these teach by argumentation and reasoning, which rush as it were into the mind, and possess it with violence, but history rather allures than forces us to virtue. There is nothing of the tyrant in example; but it gently glides into us, is easy and pleasant in its passage, and in one word, reduces into practice our speculative notions; therefore the more powerful the examples are, they are the more useful also; and by being more known they are more powerful. Now unity, which is defined, is in its own nature, more apt to be understood than multiplicity, which, in some measure, participates of infinity. The reason is Aristotle's.

Biography, or the histories of particular lives, though circumscribed in the subject, is yet more extensive in the style than the other two; for it not only comprehends them both, but has some-

what superadded, which neither of them have. The style of it is various according to the occasion. There are proper places in it for the plainness and nakedness of narration, which is ascribed to annals; there is also room reserved for the loftiness and gravity of general history, when the actions related, shall require that manner of expression. But there is withal a descent into minute circumstances, and trivial passages of life, which are natural to this way of writing, and which the dignity of the other two will not admit. There you are conducted only into the rooms of state; here you are led into the private lodgings of the hero; you see him in his undress, and are made familiar with his most private actions and conversations. You may behold a Scipio and a Lælius gathering cockleshells on the shore, Augustus playing at bounding stones with boys, and Agesilaus riding on a hobby horse among his children. The pageantry of life is taken away, you see the poor reasonable animal, as naked as nature ever made him, are made acquainted with his passions and his follies, and find the demi-god, a man.

Plutarch himself has more than once defended this kind of relating little passages; for in the life of Alexander, he says, "In writing the lives of illustrious men, I am not tied to the laws of

history ; nor does it follow that because an action is great, it therefore manifests the greatness and virtue of him who did it ; but on the other side, sometimes a word, a casual jest, betrays a man more to our knowledge of him, than a battle fought, wherein ten thousand men were slain, or the sacking of cities, or a course of victories." In another place he quotes Xenophon on the like occasion, " The sayings of great men in their familiar discourses, and amidst their wine, have somewhat in them which is worthy to be transmitted to posterity."

ESSAY 35.

ON THE BENEFITS OF
INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE
IN PROMOTING
BODILY AND MENTAL IMPROVEMENT.

(Lord Shaftesbury.)

WHOEVER has been an observer of action and grace in human bodies, must of necessity have discerned the great difference in this respect between such persons as have been taught by nature only, and such as by reflection, and the assistance of art, have learnt to form those motions, which on experience are found the easiest and most natural. Of the former kind are either those good rustics, who have been bred remote from the formed societies of men; or those plain artisans, and people of lower rank, who living in cities and places of resort, have been

history; nor does it follow that mean employment is great, it therefore *tr* opportunity and means to and virtue of him who d: better models. There side, sometimes a wor ed, so happily formed by man more to our kn *ed* with the greatest simplicity, fought, wherein *ed* education, they have still some- or the sacking. *ed* natural grace and comeliness in their In another *ed* and there are others of a better educa- like occas *ed* by a wrong aim, and injudicious affec- their fa *ed* of grace, are of all people the farthest re- have *ed* from it. It is undeniable, however, that *tr* the perfection of grace, and comeliness in action and behaviour, can be formed only among the people of a liberal education. And even among the graceful of this kind, those are still found the most graceful, who early in their youth have learnt their exercises, and formed their motions under the best masters.

Now such as these masters and their lessons are to a fine gentleman, such are philosophy and philosophers to an author. The case is the same in the fashionable and in the literate world. In the former of these it is remarked, that by the help of good company, and the force of example, merely a decent carriage is acquired, with such apt motions and such a freedom of limbs, as on ordinary occasions may enable the party to demean himself like a gentleman. But when

166 farther occasion, trial is made in an extraordinary way; when exercises of the genteeler to be performed in public, it will easily be seen that many of the pretenders have been formed at school, and had masters in private, and the other side have contented themselves with bare imitation, and learnt their art usually and by rote. The parallel is easily made on the side of writers. They have at least as much need of learning the several motions, counterpoises and ballances of the mind and passions, as the other students those of the body and limbs.

The gallant, no doubt, may pen a letter to his mistress, the courtier a compliment to the minister, or the minister to the favourite above him, without going such vast depths into learning and philosophy. But for these privileged gentlemen, though they set fashions and prescribe rules in other cases, they are no controulers in the republic of letters. Nor are they presumed to write to the age or for remote posterity. Their works are not of a nature to entitle them to hold the rank of authors, nor be styled writers, by way of excellence in the kind. Should their ambition lead them into such a field, they would be obliged to come otherwise equipped. They who enter the public lists must come duly trained

and exercised, like well appointed cavaliers, expert in arms, and well instructed in the use of their weapon and the management of their steed. For to be well accoutred and well mounted is not sufficient. The horse can never make the horseman, nor the limbs the wrestler or the dancer. No more can a genius alone make a poet, or good parts a writer, in any considerable kind. The skill and grace of writing is founded, as Horace tells us, in knowledge and good sense; and not barely in that knowledge, which is to be learnt from common authors, or the general conversation of the world, but from those particular rules of art, which philosophy alone exhibits.

ESSAY 36.

REFINEMENT IN THE ARTS.

(*Hume.*)

LUXURY is a word of an uncertain signification, and may be taken in a good as well as a bad sense. In general it means great refinement in the gratification of the senses; and any degree of it may be innocent or blamable, according to the age, country, or condition of the person. The bounds between the virtue and the vice cannot here be exactly fixed, more than in any other moral subject. To imagine, that the gratifying of any sense, or the indulging of any delicacy in meat, drink, or apparel, is of itself a vice, can never enter into a head that is not disordered by the frenzies of enthusiasm. These indulgencies are only vices, when they are pursued at the expence of some other virtue, as liberality or charity; in like manner as they are

follies, when for them a man ruins his fortune, and reduces himself to want and beggary. Where they trench upon no virtue, but leave ample subject to provide for friends, family, and every proper object of generosity or compassion, they are entirely innocent, and have in every age been acknowledged as such by almost all moralists. To be entirely occupied with the luxury of the table, for instance, without any relish for the pleasures of ambition, study, or conversation, is a mark of stupidity, and is incompatible with any vigour of temper or genius. To confine one's expence entirely to such a gratification without regard to friends or family, is an indication of a heart destitute of humanity or benevolence. But if a man reserve time sufficient for all laudable pursuits, and money sufficient for all generous purposes, he is free from every shadow of blame or reproach.

Since luxury may be considered either as innocent or blameable, one may be surprised at those preposterous opinions which have been entertained concerning it, while men of libertine principles bestow praises even on vicious luxury, and represent it as highly advantageous to society; and on the other hand, men of severe morals blame even the most innocent luxury, and represent it as the source of all the corrup-

tions, disorders and factions incident to civil government. We shall here endeavour to correct both these extremes, by proving first, that the ages of refinement are both the happiest and most virtuous; secondly, that whenever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree too far, is a quality pernicious, though perhaps not the most pernicious, to political society.

To prove the first point, we need but consider the effects of refinement both in private and public life. Human happiness, according to the most received notions, seems to consist in three ingredients, action, pleasure, and indolence; and though these ingredients ought to be mixed in different proportions, according to the particular disposition of the person, yet no one ingredient can be entirely wanting, without destroying, in some measure, the relish of the whole composition. Indolence or repose, indeed, seems not of itself to contribute much to our enjoyment; but like sleep is requisite as an indulgence to the weakness of human nature, which cannot support an uninterrupted course of business or pleasure. That quick march of the spirits which takes a man from himself, and chiefly gives satisfaction, does in the end exhaust the mind, and requires some intervals of repose, which though

agreeable for a moment, yet if prolonged beget a languor and lethargy that destroys all enjoyment.

Education, custom, and example, have a mighty influence in turning the mind to any of these pursuits; and it must be owned, that where they promote a relish for action and pleasure, they are so far favourable to human happiness. In times when industry and the arts flourish, men are kept in perpetual occupation, and enjoy, as their reward, the occupation itself, as well as those pleasures which are the fruit of their labour. The mind acquires new vigour, enlarges its powers and faculties; and by an assiduity in honest industry, both satisfies its natural appetites, and prevents the growth of unnatural ones, which commonly spring up, when nourished by ease and idleness. Banish those arts from society, you deprive men both of action and of pleasure; and leaving nothing but indolence in their place, you even destroy the relish of indolence, which never is agreeable, but when it succeeds to labour, and recruits the spirits exhausted by too much application and fatigue.

Another advantage of industry and of refinements in the mechanical arts is, that they commonly produce some refinements in the liberal;

nor can one be carried to perfection, without being accompanied, in some degree, with the other. The same age, which produces great philosophers and politicians, renowned generals and poets, usually abounds with skilful weavers and ship carpenters. We cannot reasonably expect that a piece of woollen cloth will be wrought to perfection in a nation that is ignorant of astronomy, or where ethics are neglected.

The spirit of the age affects all the artists; and the minds of men being once roused from their lethargy, and put into a fermentation, turn themselves on all sides, and carry improvements into every art and science. Profound ignorance is totally banished, and men enjoy the privilege of rational creatures, to think as well as to act, to cultivate the pleasures of the mind as well as those of the body.

The more these refined arts advance, the more sociable men become: nor is it possible that when enriched with science, and possessed of a fund of conversation, they should be content to remain in solitude, or live with their fellow citizens in that distant manner which is peculiar to ignorant and barbarous nations. They flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or

furniture. Curiosity allures the wise ; vanity the foolish ; and pleasure both. Particular clubs and societies are every where formed ; both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner ; and the tempers of men as well as their behaviour refine apace. So that besides the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts, it is impossible but they must feel an increase of humanity from the very habit of conversing together, and contributing to each others pleasure and entertainment. Thus industry, knowledge, and humanity, are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and what are commonly denominated the more luxurious ages.

But industry, knowledge, and humanity, are not advantageous in private life alone ; they diffuse their beneficial influence on the public, and render the government as great and flourishing as they make individuals happy and prosperous. The increase and consumption of all commodities which serve to the ornament and pleasure of life, are advantageous to society, because, at the same time that they multiply those innocent gratifications to individuals, they are a kind of storehouse of labour, which in the exigencies of a state, may be turned to the public service. In a

nation, where there is no demand for such superfluities, men sink into indolence, lose all enjoyment of life, and are useless to the public, which cannot maintain or support its fleets and armies from the industry of such slothful members.

This industry is much promoted by the knowledge, inseparable from ages of art, and refinement; as on the other hand, this knowledge enables the public to make the best advantage of the industry of its subjects. Laws, order, police, discipline, these can never be carried to any degree of perfection, before human reason has refined itself by exercise, and, by an application to the more vulgar arts, at least, of commerce and manufacture. Can we expect that a government will be well modelled by a people who know not how to make a spinning wheel, or to employ a loom with advantage? Not to mention that all ignorant ages are infested with superstition, which throws the government off its bias, and disturbs men in the pursuit of their interest and happiness.

Knowledge in the arts of government naturally begets mildness and moderation, by instructing men in the advantages of humane maxims above rigour and severity, which drive subjects into rebellion, and make submission impractica-

ble, by cutting off all hopes of pardon. When the tempers of men are softened as well as their knowledge improved, this humanity appears still more conspicuous, and is the chief characteristic which distinguishes a civilized age from times of barbarity and ignorance.

Factions are then less inveterate, revolutions less tragical, authority less severe, and seditions less frequent. Even foreign wars abate of their cruelty; and after the field of battle where honour and interest steel men against compassion as well as fear, the combatants divest themselves of the brute, and resume the man.

To declaim against present times, and magnify the virtue of remote ancestors, is a propensity almost inherent in human nature; and, as the sentiments and opinions of civilized ages alone are transmitted to posterity, hence it is that we meet with so many severe judgments pronounced against luxury, and even science; and hence it is, that, at present, we give so ready an assent to them. But the fallacy is easily perceived by comparing different nations that are contemporaries, where we both judge more impartially, and can set in opposition those manners with which we are sufficiently acquainted. Treachery and cruelty, the most pernicious and most odious of all vices, seem peculiar to uncivilized ages; and by



the refined Greeks and Romans were ascribed to all the barbarous nations which surrounded them. They might justly, therefore, have presumed, that their own ancestors so highly celebrated, possessed no greater virtues, and were as much inferior to their posterity in honour and humanity, as in taste and science. An antient Frank or Saxon may be highly extolled; but I believe every man would think his life or fortune much less secure in the hands of a Moor or Tartar, than in those of a French or English gentleman, the rank of men the most civilized in the most civilized nations.

ESSAY 37.

PLEASURE.

(*Collier.*)

THAT Pleasure, exactly considered, is an advantage, must be granted by the most severe philosophy. It is the principal purpose of nature, and the sole object of inclination. Without

we shall find few actions forbidden, but such as are naturally prejudicial to health, to reason, or to society.

The general division of pleasure is into that of the mind and of the body. The former is more valuable upon several accounts.

The causes of mental enjoyments are more reputable than the other. Corporeal pleasures are comparatively ignoble; they seem founded in want and imperfection. There must be something of uneasiness to introduce them, and make them welcome. When the pain of hunger is once over, eating is a heavy entertainment. The senses are some of them so mean, that they scarce relish any thing but what they solicit. But rational delights have a better origin: they spring from noble speculations, or generous actions; from enlargement of knowledge, or instances of virtue; from something which argues worth, and virtue, and improvement.

The satisfactions of the mind are more at command. We may think of a handsome performance, or an agreeable idea at our leisure. This entertainment is ready with little warning or expence. A short recollection brings it upon the stage, brightens the idea, and makes it shine as much as when it was first stamped upon the memory. Thoughts take up no room; where

they are right, they afford a portable pleasure. We may travel with them without incumbrance or trouble.

The case with the body is much otherwise; here the satisfaction is more confined to a circumstance of place, and moves in a narrower compass. We cannot have a pleasant taste or smell, unless the object and the sense are near together; a little distance makes the delight withdraw and vanish like a phantasm. There is no perfuming the memory, or regaling the palate with the fancy. We have indeed some faint notion of these absent delights, but it is derived from imagination, and not from sense. I grant the eye and the ear command farther, but still these have their limits; and besides, they can only reach an object present, but not make it so. Whereas the mind by a sort of magic, raises the ghost of a departed pleasure, and makes it appear without any dependence upon space or time.

To go no higher than the standard of humanity, methinks the satisfactions of the mind are of a brighter nature, and appear with distinguishing greatness. There is nothing of hurry and mistiness in them. The perceptions are all clear, and stay for perusal and admiration. The scene is dressed up like a triumph, the fancy is

illuminated, and the show marches on with dignity and state. If the senses have any, it lies in the strength of the impression; but this point may be fairly disputed. When the mind is well awakened and grown up to the pleasures of reason, they are strangely affecting. The luxury of thought seems no less than that of the palate; the discovery of a great invention may be as moving as epicurism. The entertainments of Plato were as highly seasoned as those of Apicius. Archimedes passed his time as pleasantly as Sardanapalus; and the charms of authority made Cato aver, that old age was none of the most undiverting periods of life.

The senses are not sufficiently strong for any great force of pleasure. A sudden excess of joy has sometimes proved mortal. It is as dangerous as gunpowder, charge too high, and you split the barrel; it flashes too hard upon the tender organ, and stupifies rather than pleases.

The body was not made to be our master, as may appear from self denial, which has a mixture of something agreeable. It is a pleasure to arrest an importunate appetite; to silence the clamour of a passion, to repel an assault upon our virtue, is a noble instance of force, a handsome proof of temper and discretion. A brave mind must be entertained by surveying its conquests,

and being conscious of its sovereignty. Thus, by frequent resistance and generous thinking, the forbearance is as great as the enjoyment, and that which was at first too mighty for opposition, becomes at last too little for notice.

Pleasure, of what kind soever, is nothing but an agreement between the object and the faculty. This description, well applied, will give us the true height of ourselves, and tell us our size. If little things please us, we may conclude that we have no greatness of mind: children are, as well known by their diversions as by their stature. Those satisfactions which require capacity and understanding to relish them, which either require improvement or promote it, are of the better sort. On the other side, to be pleased with gaudiness in habit, with gingles and false ornament in discourse, with antic motions and gestures, is a sign that the inclinations are trifling, and the judgment vulgar and unpolished. There should be somewhat of greatness and proportion, and curiosity in things, to justify our appetite; to be gained by every little pretending entertainment does but shew our meanness.

The existence of pleasure, as things stand at present, is very precarious; not to mention any other inconvenience, pleasure is dangerously ex-

posed to the incursions of pain ; and when those two parties happen to meet, the enemy always gains the advantage. Pain is a strange domineering perception ; it forces us into an acknowledgment of its superiority, it keeps off satisfactions when we have them not, and destroys them when we have. The prick of a pin is enough to make an empire insipid for the time. In a word, the end of pleasure is to support the offices of life, to relieve the fatigues of business, to reward a regular action, and encourage the continuance in well doing.

ESSAY 38.

UNIVERSALITY OF KNOWLEDGE.

(*Locke.*)

UNIVERSALITY of Knowledge, is certainly very useful, and necessary to form the mind, but then it must be done not for talk and vanity, to fill a man's head with shreds of discourses of all he

shall meet with, as if nothing could come amiss to him; and his head was so well stored a magazine, that nothing could be proposed of which he was not master. This is an excellency indeed, and a great one too, to have a real and true knowledge in all or most of the objects of contemplation. But it is what the mind of one and the same man can hardly attain; and the instances are so few of those who have in some measure approached towards it, that I know not whether they are to be proposed as examples in the ordinary conduct of the understanding. To understand fully the business of his particular calling in the common-wealth, and of religion, which is his calling as he is a man in the world, is usually enough to take up his whole time; and there are few that inform themselves in these, which is every one's proper and peculiar business, so deeply as they should do.

But, though this be so, and there are few that extend their thoughts towards universal knowledge, yet I do not doubt, if the right way were taken, and the methods of enquiry were ordered as they should be, men of little business, and great leisure, might go a great deal farther in it than is usually done.

The end and use of a little insight in those parts of knowledge, which are not one's proper

business is, to accustom our minds to all sorts of ideas, and the proper ways of examining our habitudes and relations. This gives the mind a freedom ; and the exercise of the understanding in the several ways of enquiry and reasoning, which the most skilful have used, teaches sagacity and wariness, and a suppleness to apply more closely and dexterously to the bends and turns of the matter in all its researches.

Besides, this universal taste of all the sciences, with an indifferency before the mind is possessed with any in particular, and grown into love and admiration of what it made its darling, will prevent another evil commonly to be observed in those who have from the beginning been seasoned only by one part of knowledge. If we give ourselves up to the contemplation of one sort of knowledge, that will become every thing. The mind will take such a tincture from a familiarity with that object, that every thing else, how remote soever, will be brought under the same view.

A metaphysician will bring ploughing and gardening immediately to abstract notions, the history of nature shall signify nothing to him. An alchymist, on the contrary, shall reduce divinity to the maxims of his laboratory, explain morality by sal, sulphur, and mercury, and allego-

rise the scripture itself, and its sacred mysteries, into the philosopher's stone. And I heard once, a man, who had a more than ordinary excellency in music, seriously accommodate Moses's seven days of the week, to the notes of music, as if from thence had been taken the measure and method of the creation. It is of no small consequence to keep the mind from such a possession, which I think is best done by giving it a fair and equal view of the whole intellectual world, wherein it may see the order, rank, and beauty of the whole, and give a just allowance to the distinct provinces of the several sciences in the due order and usefulness of each.

If this be that which old men will not think necessary, nor be easily brought to, it is fit at least that it should be practised in the breeding of the young. The business of education is not, I think, to make them perfect in any one of the sciences, but so to open and dispose their minds as may best make them capable of any, when they shall apply themselves to it. If men are for a long time accustomed only to one sort or method of thoughts, their minds grow stiff in it, and do not readily turn to another. Therefore, to give them this freedom, they should be made to look into all sorts of knowledge, and exercise their understandings in so wide a variety and

stock. But I do not propose it as a variety and stock of knowledge, but as a variety and freedom of thinking, as an increase to the powers and activity of the mind, not as an enlargement of its possessions.

ESSAY 39.

READING.

(*Locke.*)

THOSE who have read of every thing, are thought to understand every thing too ; but it is not always so. Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge ; it is thinking makes what we read ours. We are of the ruminating kind, and it is not enough to cram ourselves with a great load of collections ; unless we chew them over again, they will not give us strength, and nourishment.

There are indeed in some writers visible instances of deep thoughts, close and acute reasoning, and ideas well pursued. The light these would

give would be of great use, if the reader would observe and imitate them ; but that can only be done by our own meditation, and examining the reach, force, and coherence of what is said ; and as far then as we apprehend and see the connection of ideas, so far it is ours ; without that it is but loose matter floating in our brain.

The memory may be stored, but the judgment is little better, and the stock of knowledge not increased by being able to repeat what others have said, or produce the arguments we have found in them. Such a knowledge as this, is but knowledge by hearsay, and the ostentation of it is at best, but talking by rote, and very often upon weak and wrong principles. For all which is to be found in books, is not built upon true foundations, nor always deduced from the principles on which it is pretended to be built. Such an examination as is requisite to discover that, every reader's mind is not forward to make, especially in those who have given themselves up to a party, and only hunt for what they can scrape together, that may favour and support the tenets of it. Such men wilfully exclude themselves from truth, and from all benefit to be received by reading.

Others of more indifferency, often want attention and industry. The mind is backward in

itself to be at the pains to trace every argument to its original, and to see upon what basis it stands, and how firmly; but yet it is this that gives so much the advantage to one man more than another in reading. The mind should, by severe rules, be tied down to this, at first uneasy task; use and exercise will give it facility. So that those who are accustomed to it, readily, with one cast of the eye, take a view of the argument, and presently in many cases see where it bottoms. Those who have got this faculty, one may say, have the true key of books, and the clue to lead them through the great variety of opinions and authors to truth and certainty. To this young beginners should be accustomed, and the use explained, that they might profit by their reading. Those who are strangers to it, will be apt to think it too great a clog in the way of studies, and they will suspect they shall make but small progress, if, in the books they read, they must examine and unravel every argument, and follow it step by step up to its original.

I answer, this is a good objection, and ought to weigh with those whose reading is designed for much talk and little knowledge. But I am here enquiring into the conduct of the understanding in its progress towards knowledge; and

I may say that he, who fair and softly goes steadily forward in a course that points right, will sooner be at his journey's end, than he that runs after every one he meets, did he gallop all day full speed.

To which, let me add, that this way of reflecting on, and profiting by, what we read, will be an impediment in the beginning; but when custom and exercise has made it familiar, will be dispatched on most occasions, without resting or interruption in the course of our reading. The motions and views of a mind exercised that way are wonderfully quick; and a man used to such sort of reflections sees as much at one glimpse as would require a long discourse to lay before another, and make out in an entire and gradual deduction. Besides, when the first difficulties are over, the delight and sensible advantage it brings, mightily encourages and enlivens the mind in reading, which without this is very improperly called study.

ESSAY 40.

OF THE TRUE USE OF
RETIREMENT.

(Lord Bolingbroke.)

WHILST we remain in the world, we are all fettered down, more or less, to one common level, and have neither all the leisure nor all the means and advantages to soar above it, which we may procure to ourselves by breaking these fetters in retreat.

To talk of abstracting ourselves from matter, laying aside body, and being resolved, as it were, into pure intellect, is proud, metaphysical, unmeaning jargon; but to abstract ourselves from the prejudices, and habits, and pleasures, and business of the world, is no more than many are, though all are not, capable of doing. They who can do this, may elevate their souls in retreat to an higher station, and may take from thence such a view of the world as the second Scipio took in his dream from the seats of the blessed, when the whole earth appeared so little to him,

that he could scarce discern that speck of dirt, the Roman empire.

Such a view as this will increase our knowledge, by shewing us our ignorance; will distinguish every degree of probability, from the lowest to the highest, and mark the distance between that and certainty; will dispel the intoxicating fumes of philosophical presumption, and teach us to establish our peace of mind, where alone it can rest securely, in resignation. In short, such a view will render life more agreeable, and death less terrible. Is not this business? Is not this pleasure too? the highest pleasure! The world can afford us none such; we must retire from the world to taste it with a full gust; but we shall taste it the better for having been in the world.

But to lead such a life with satisfaction and profit, merely to renounce the pleasures of this world, and break the habits of both, is not sufficient. The supine creature, whose understanding is superficially employed through life, about a few general notions, and is never bent to a close and steady pursuit of truth, may renounce the pleasures and business of the world, and may break the habits; nay, he may retire and drone away life in solitude like a monk, or like him over the door of whose house, as if his house

had been his tomb, somebody wrote, "There lies such an one."

But no such man will be able to make the true use of retirement. The employment of his mind that would have been agreeable and easy, if he had accustomed himself to it early, will be unpleasant and impracticable late. Such men lose their intellectual powers, for want of exercising them, and having trifled away youth, are reduced to the necessity of trifling away age.

It fares with the mind just as it does with the body. He who was born with a texture of brain as strong as that of Newton, may become unable to perform the common rules of arithmetic; just as he who has the same elasticity in his muscles, the same suppleness in his joints, and all his nerves and sinews as well braced as Jacob Hall*, may become a fat unwieldy sluggard.

To set about acquiring the habits of meditation and study, late in life, is like getting into a go-cart with a grey beard, and learning to walk when we have lost the use of our legs. In general, the foundations of an happy old age must be laid in youth, and in particular, he who has not cultivated his reason young will be utterly unable to improve it old.

* A famous posture-master.

Not only a love of study, and a desire of knowledge must have grown up with us, but such an industrious application likewise as requires the whole vigour of the mind to be exerted in the pursuit of truth through long trains of ideas, and all those dark recesses, wherein man, not God, has hid it.

ESSAY 41.

WIT.

(*Sir Richard Blackmore.*)

THE inclinations of men carry them with great force to those objects that please their appetites, and gratify their senses; and which, not only from early acquaintance and familiarity, but as being adapted to the prevailing instincts of nature, are more esteemed and pursued, than all other satisfactions. As those inferior enjoyments, that only affect the organs of the body, are chiefly coveted; so next to these, that light and facetious qualification of the mind, that di-

verts the hearers, and is proper to produce mirth and alacrity, has in all ages, been admired and applauded. No productions of human understanding, are received with such a general pleasure and approbation, as those that abound with wit and humour, which are more valued than the wisest and most instructive discourses. Hence a pleasant man is always caressed above a wise one; and ridicule and satire, that entertain the laughers, often put solid reason and useful science out of countenance.

Since the power of wit is so prevalent, and has obtained such an esteem and popularity, that a man, endowed with this agreeable quality, is by many looked on as a heavenly being, if compared with others, who have nothing but learning and a clear arguing head, it will be worth while to search into its nature, examine its usefulness, and take a view of those fatal effects it produces when it happens to be misapplied.

Wit imparts spirit to our conceptions and dictions, by giving them a lively and novel, and therefore an agreeable form; and thus its nature is limited and diversified from all other intellectual endowments. The addition of wit to proper subjects, is like the artful improvement of the cook, who, by his exquisite sauce, gives to a plain dish a pleasant and unusual relish. A

man of this character works on simple propositions, a rich embroidery of flowers and figures, and imitates the curious artist, who studs and inlays his prepared steel with devices of gold and silver. But wit is not only the improvement of a plain piece by intellectual enamelling: besides this, it animates and warms a cold sentiment, and makes it glow with life and vigour, by giving it an elegant and surprising turn. It always conveys the thought of the speaker or writer clothed in a pleasing but foreign dress, in which it never appeared to the hearer before; and this appearance in the habit of a stranger must be admirable, since surprise naturally arises from novelty, as delight and wonder result from surprise.

As to its efficient cause: wit owes its production to an extraordinary and peculiar temperament in the constitution, or an affluence of animal spirits highly refined and rectified. Hence, they become proper instruments for the sprightly operations of the mind, by which means the imagination can with great facility range the wide field of nature, contemplate an infinite variety of objects, and by observing the similitude and disagreement of their several qualities, single out and abstract, and then suit and unite those ideas which best serve its purpose. Hence beautiful allu-

sions, surprising metaphors, and admirable sentiments are always ready at hand; and while the fancy is full of images collected from innumerable objects and their different qualities, relations, and habitudes, it can at pleasure dress a common notion in a strange and becoming garb, to the great delight and wonder of the hearer.

But, unfortunately, persons of this lively and facetious turn are generally deficient in wisdom; for wit and discretion are almost incapable of a friendly union*, and cannot, without great difficulty, be incorporated in the constitution of any single individual. For nothing is more common, than to see persons of this class always think right, and always act wrong; admirable for the richness, delicacy, and brightness of their imaginations, and at the same time to be pitied for their

* Lord Chesterfield, who spoke from experience on this subject, corroborates the remark, that wit and judgment are seldom united. In a letter to his son, he justly observes, "That ready wit which you so partially allow me, and so justly to Sir Charles Williams, may create many admirers; but, take my word for it, it makes few friends. It shines and dazzles like the noon-day sun, but, like that too, is very apt to scorch; and therefore is always feared. The milder morning and evening light and heat of that planet, sooth and calm our minds. Good sense, complaisance, gentleness of manners, attentions, and graces, are the only things that can truly engage and durably keep the heart at a long run. Never

want of prudence and common sense; abounding with excellent maxims, and instructive sentiments, which, however, are not of the least use to themselves, in the conduct of their lives. And hence it is certain, that though the gentlemen of a pleasant and witty turn of mind often make the industrious merchant and grave persons of all professions, the subjects of their raillery, and expose them as stupid creatures not supportable in good company; yet these in their turn, may as justly reproach the others for want of industry, good sense, and regular economy; much more valuable talents than those, which any mere wit can boast. Therefore, wise parents, who earnestly desire that their children may excel in intellectual endowments, should, instead of refined parts, and a genius turned for pleasant conversation, wish them a solid understanding, and a faculty of close and clear reasoning; these qua-

seek for wit; if it presents itself, well and good: but, even in that case, let your judgment interpose, and take care that it be not at the expence of any body. Pope says, very truly,

“ There are whom Heaven has blest with store of wit,
“ Yet want as much again to govern it.”

And in another place, I doubt with too much truth:

“ For wit and judgment ever are at strife,
“ Though meant each others aid, like man and wife.”

fications being likely to make them good men, and the other only good companions.

This leads to another observation, namely, that persons of facetious talents, and agreeable humour, in whose temperament judgment and discretion are usually found in a disproportionate measure, are more inclined than others, to levity and dissolute manners. The same swiftness of thought and sprightliness of imagination, that qualify them for ingenious conversation, sports of fancy, and comic writing, do likewise give them an exquisite taste of sensual pleasures, and expose them to the prevailing power of tempting, though forbidden enjoyments. The passions and appetites of men thus endowed with a redundancy of warm and lively spirits, are more violent and impatient of restraint, than those of a cooler and less active complexion, who, however, may be more eminent in the superior faculties of the mind. Hence it will be no wonder, that while their propensity to pleasure is much stronger; and their reason much weaker than those of other men, they should be less able than others to resist the allurements of criminal delights. This remark is confirmed by daily experience. How few of this facetious and comic species of men, caressed and applauded for their shining parts, and witty discourses, escape the suares

that encompass them, and preserve their virtue and sobriety of manners? It too often happens, that a man, elevated above the rest by his uncommon genius, is as much distinguished by his extraordinary immorality.

The objects about which wit is exercised, are the common and less important actions of life. It is employed in its own province, when it is exercised on the ordinary customs and manners of life, either in conversation or comic writing. It has, therefore, no place in works of severe knowledge and judgment; those superior productions of the understanding, must be expressed in a clear and strong manner, without intervening strains of wit, or facetious fancies, which, were they admitted, would appear incongruous and impertinent, and diminish the merit of the writing.

Hence wit has no place in history, philology, philosophy, or in the greater lyric or epic poems, the two last of which containing either the praises of deities, or demi-gods, or treating of lofty and illustrious subjects, such as the foundation, rise, and revolution of kingdoms, commotions of state, battles, triumphs, solemn embassies, and various other important actions of princes and heroes, are exalted above the sphere of wit and humour. The strength and dignity of the sub-

lime stile is debased by the foreign mixture of light sentiments and pretty fancies. These sallies and sports of the imagination, will no more heighten the beauty of such superior productions, than the addition of glittering tinsel and glass beads, will improve the imperial purple, or adorn the crowns of great monarchs; we see, therefore, with what judicious care Virgil has avoided this error; how clear are his celebrated writings from the least sprinkling of wit and pleasant conceits, which corrupt the purity, debase the majesty, and sully the lustre of the greater species of poetry. And, as the gravity and chastity of the sublime stile will not endure the gay ornaments of fancy, so does that light dress more misbecome the pious and wise discourses that issue either from the pulpit or the press*. Wit is so far from being a grace or improvement of divine eloquence, that, on the contrary, it destroys its dignity, breaks its force, and renders it weak and puerile.

The end and use of this ingenious qualification, is to delight and instruct; it animates and sweetens conversation, by raising mirth and good

* There was just reason for this censure of wit in the pulpit, in the time of Blackmore, when even our best Divines frequently indulged in ridiculous puns and conceits.

humour; and by this effect, it relieves domestic cares, revives men of business and studious professions, and softens the asperity of morose dispositions; it suspends uneasy and anxious thoughts, dispels cloudy and sullen melancholy, and by unbending and exhilarating the mind, gives new life and spirit to resume the labour of our respective employments.

The exercise of wit, and a pleasant genius, excels all other recreations. What is the satisfaction that arises from country sports, or the politer diversions of balls and operas, compared with the delightful conversation of men of parts and facetious talents? Other amusements, how agreeable soever, only please the body, and gratify the senses; but this strikes the imagination, touches the passions, and recreates the intellectual faculties. And, as the taste of the soul is more delicate and exquisite than that of the body, so much superior are the pleasures of one to those of the other. It is no wonder then, that the assemblies of friends are dull and heavy, that feasts and wine are flat entertainments, unless some ingenious persons are present to improve their taste, and enliven the company, by agreeable discourses.

Another part of the province in which wit is properly exercised, are ingenious writings in-

tended to please and improve ; and this is more various and extensive than comic poetry, though of the same kind ; for it takes in not only the subjects of prudence and decency, regular behaviour, and virtuous actions, but likewise the justness of human sentiments and opinions in points of controversy ; of the last, the Dialogue of Dr. Eachard against Mr. Hobbes, is a famous example, where by great strength and solidity of reason, mixed with agreeable wit and raillery, he entertains and informs the reader, and at once exposes and confutes the conceited philosopher. An instance of the first, is the celebrated History of Don Quixote, a book so well imagined, and written with so much spirit and fine raillery, that it effectually produced the end of the admirable author ; for by turning into mirth and ridicule the reigning folly of romantic chivalry, and freeing the minds of the people from that fashionable delusion ; he broke the force of as strong an enchantment, and destroyed as great a monster as was ever vanquished by their imaginary heroes.

Many more books on other moral subjects have been composed with much wit and vivacity, in our own and foreign countries, to expose vice and folly, and promote decency and sobriety of manners. But the productions of this nature, which

have of late appeared in this nation, whether we regard the just and generous sentiments, the fertile invention, the variety of subjects, the surprising turns of wit and facetious imagination, the genteel satire, the purity and propriety of the words, and the beauty and dignity of the diction, have surpassed all the productions of this kind that have been published in any age or country. The reader, no doubt, is beforehand with me, and concludes, that I mean the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, which have all the perfection of writing, and all the advantages of wit and humour that are required to instruct and entertain.

This excellent and amiable qualification of the mind, is too apt to be abused and perverted to ill purposes. Instead of being engaged on the side of virtue, and used to promote just notions and regularity of life, it is frequently employed to expose the most sacred things, to turn gravity and reserved behaviour into ridicule, to keep in countenance vice, and irreligion, and with a petulant and unrestrained liberty, to deride the principles and practice of the wisest and best of men.

This is certainly the greatest abuse of wit imaginable. In all the errors and monstrous productions of nature, can any appear more deformed than a man of parts, who employs his

admirable qualities in bringing piety into contempt, putting virtue to the blush, and making sobriety of manners the common subject of his mirth : while with zeal and industry, he propagates the malignant contagion of vice and irreligion, poisons his friends and admirers, and promotes the destruction of his native country ? And if these foolish wits and ingenious madmen could reflect, they would soon be convinced that while engaged against religion, they hurt themselves ; and, that wit and humour thus misapplied, will prove but a wretched compensation for their want of virtue.

Wit is likewise misapplied when exercised to ridicule any unavoidable defects and deformities of body and mind ; for, since nothing is a moral blemish, but as it is the effect of our own choice, nothing can be disgraceful but what is voluntary and brought freely upon ourselves ; and, since nothing is the proper object of raillery and ridicule but what is shameful, it must be a violence to reason and humanity, to expose and reproach others for any thing that was not in their power to escape. And, therefore, to make a man contemptible, and the jest of the company, by deriding him for his mis-shapen body, ill figured face, stammering speech, and low degree of un-

derstanding, is a great abuse of ingenious faculties.

Nor is it a less criminal use of this talent when it is exercised in lascivious discourses. The venom is not less, but more infectious and destructive when conveyed by artful insinuation, and a delicate turn of wit. When impure sentiments are expressed by men of a heavy and gross imagination in direct and open terms, the company are put out of countenance, and nauseate the coarseness of the conversation; but a man of wit gilds the poison, dresses his wanton thoughts in a beautiful habit, and by slanting and side approaches, possesses the imagination of the hearers, before his design is well discovered, by which means, he more effectually gains admission into the mind, and fills the fancy with immodest ideas.

Men of finer spirits, do likewise abuse their parts, as well as misapply their time, when to gain applause and increase their popularity, they run without distinction into company, and by too great condescension and false humanity, mingle in inferior and unworthy assemblies; when delighted with the silly approbation of ignorant laughers, they shine forth in a great effusion of wit and humour, by which they make themselves cheap, if not contemptible in the opi-

nion of wise and discerning persons. Men of singular wit, like women of great beauty, should never be unguarded, for if not endowed with a decent reserve, a modest air, and a discreet behaviour, they sink in their value; and by appearing in all places, and becoming common and familiar, lose in a great measure, their honour, and their merit.

It is a meretricious prostitution of wit, when the possessors of it can deny no addresses, and refuse no invitations and appointments, but suffer themselves to be shewn at every entertainment. Besides, the gratifying of their vanity, by a constant pursuit of approbation and praise, which is the spring whence this prodigality of parts, and waste of facetious humour, chiefly arise; it is evident, they spend a great deal of time, of which a wise man can give no proper account, while wit, which should in its proper place, renew and revive the spirits for useful employment, becomes a continued diversion, and makes everlasting idleness the business of life.

ESSAY 42.

ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE
ENGLISH CONSTITUTION.

(Bishop Atterbury.)

IT is natural for men to think *that* government the best, under which they drew their first breath, and to propose it as a model and a standard for all others. But if any people upon earth have a just title, thus to boast, it is we of this island, who enjoy a constitution, wisely moulded out of all the different forms and kinds of civil government, into such an excellent and happy frame, as contains in it all the advantages of those several forms, without sharing deeply in any of their great inconveniences.

A constitution nicely poised between the extremes of too much liberty, and too much power, whose several parts have a proper check upon each other, when any of them happen to tread awry; which, yet, is sure in dangerous

conjunctures, to give way to the common good of the whole.

A constitution, where the prince is cloathed with a prerogative that enables him to do all the good to which he is inclined, and wants no power but what a good prince would not, and an ill one ought not to have ; where he governs though not absolutely, yet gloriously, because he governs men, and not slaves, and is obeyed by them chearfully, because they know, that in obeying him, they obey those laws only, which they themselves had a share in contriving.

A constitution, where the external government of the church is so closely interwoven with that of the state, and so exactly adapted to it in all its parts, as that it can flourish only when that flourishes, and must, as it always has hitherto done, incline, die, and revive with it. In a word, where the interests of prince and subject, priest and people, are perpetually the same ; and the only fatal mistake that ever happens in our politics, is when they are thought to be divided.

It is objected, indeed, to this admirable model, that it is liable to frequent struggles, and concussions within, from the several interfering parts ; but this, which is reckoned the disease of our constitution, may rather be thought a mark of its soundness, and the chief security of its con-

tinuance. For, it is with governments exactly contrived, as with bodies of a nice frame and texture, where the humours being evenly mixed, every little change of the proportion introduces a disorder, and raises that ferment, which is necessary to bring all right again ; and which thus preserves the health of the whole, by giving early notice of whatever is noxious to any of the parts. Whereas in governments, as well as bodies of a coarser make, the disease will not often begin to shew itself till it has infected the whole mass, and is past a cure ; and so though they are disordered later, yet they are destroyed much sooner.

ESSAY 43.

BEAUTIFUL OBJECTS SMALL.

(Burke.)

THE most obvious point that presents itself to us in examining any object, is its extent or quantity. And what degree of extent prevails in bodies that are held beautiful, may be gathered from the usual manner of expression concerning it. I am told, that in most languages, the objects of love are spoken of under diminutive epithets. It is so in all the languages of which I have any knowledge. In Greek, the *μικρ*, and other diminutive terms, are almost always the terms of affection and tenderness. These diminutives were commonly added by the Greeks, to the names of persons with whom they conversed on the terms of friendship and familiarity. Though the Romans were a people of less quick and delicate feelings, yet they naturally slid into the lessening terminations upon the same occasions. Antiently, in the English language, the diminish-

ing *ling* was added to the names of persons and things that were the objects of love. Some we retain still, as *dar-ling* (or little dear), and a few others. But, to this day, in ordinary conversation, it is usual to add the endearing name of *little*, to every thing we love: the French and Italians make use of these affectionate diminutives even more than we. In the animal creation out of our own species, it is the small we are inclined to be fond of; little birds, and some of the smaller kinds of beasts. A great beautiful thing is a manner of expression scarcely ever used; but that of a great ugly thing, is very common.

There is a wide difference between admiration and love. The sublime, which is the cause of the former, always dwells on great objects and terrible; the latter, on small ones and pleasing. We submit to what we admire, but we love what submits to us; in one case we are forced, in the other, we are flattered, into compliance.

In short, the ideas of the sublime and beautiful stand on foundations so different, that it is hard, I had almost said impossible, to think of reconciling them in the same subject, without considerably lessening the effect of the one or the other upon the passions, so that attending to their quantity, beautiful objects are comparatively small,

ESSAY 44.

*MINOS, A FABLE.**(From the Museum.)*

MINOS was looked upon as the justest king upon earth. He governed his Cretans with equity; and was highly favoured by the gods. One day in particular, when he was retired into the sacred grotto, in the gardens behind his palace, he fell into a dream, or rather vision.

Mercury appeared to him with a mild and pleasing aspect, and told him that he came by order of Jupiter to bring him before his presence in the highest heavens. He was immediately conveyed through the air by his divine conductor, quite up to the Palace of Light, much above the fixed stars. On their arrival there, they saw Jupiter sitting on a throne, with a pair of scales in his hands (as the goddess of Justice is generally represented in statues) and a number of little weights, with strange characters on them,

piled up in two heaps on each side of him. Before him stood a spirit just departed from our world, who turned away his face as struck on a sudden with shame and confusion.

That spirit, says Mercury, is just going to receive his sentence for what he has done on earth; and it seems likely to go worse with him than he expected. All the actions of man, you know, must be either good, bad, or indifferent. We above call those actions only good, which produce some real benefit or happiness among men; and those bad which produce some real mischief or unhappiness. Every action that does neither, we call indifferent. Every good action, as soon as performed, is marked down on a golden weight, (like those you see on the right hand of Jupiter) exactly proportioned in size to the good produced by such action; and every bad one is marked on a brass weight exactly proportioned to the evil produced. The weights thus marked belonging to the same man, are kept always in two different parcels, during the life of the man; and immediately on his death, are brought before Jupiter, and put into these scales. If the gold weights are the heaviest, he is adjudged worthy of bliss, and if the brass, the contrary. It is but too evident to one's eyes in this case, that the brass weights are the most numerous and most ponderous.

As Mercury was saying this, Jupiter called out to the spirit to turn his face towards him and receive his sentence; and Minos knew him to be Sebastor the rich Cretan, and one of the chief citizens of Gnossus*; on which he could not conceal the greatness of his astonishment. "What," cried he, "is Sebastor going to be condemned by Jupiter! That Sebastor, who passed so many hours every day before his shrine, and who offered up an hundred oxen on his altars, on our last great festival! Why, he was considered as the most devout man in all the island of Crete!" "If you will suspend your wonder a little," says Mercury, "we may hear his sentence."

All this while Jupiter looked on him with a mixture of sternness and compassion. "Unhappy mortal," said he, "you see how widely you were mistaken! The unerring weights are against you. Had you done more real good with the riches entrusted to your care, the right scale would have prevailed, but instead of doing good to man, you only thought of making presents to the gods. It is now too late for you to learn, that the gods are not to be bribed; and as you have done so very little that has been beneficial to mankind, your

* The capital of Crete, where Minos and his court resided.

“ lot must be to go to those that have been use-
“ less in their generation.”

After thus giving his sentence, Jupiter turned towards Minos, and dismissed him with the following words. “ Minos; you have seen our way
“ of judging; your justice and good actions are
“ marked down on golden weights here, and
“ they are more than I ever yet saw for any
“ prince on earth. It is for this reason, that I
“ intend hereafter to constitute you my deputy;
“ and to make you the chief disposer of all the
“ spirits that come from your world. Go on,
“ follow the laws of justice and virtue while you
“ live, and when you die and arrive at the dig-
“ nity I have assured to you, remember my rules
“ of judgment, and place every one in more
“ bliss or unhappiness hereafter, in exact propor-
“ tion to the overbalance of happiness or misery,
“ that he may have occasioned in the whole
“ course of his life. Let this be your rule; and
“ then you will judge men in the same manner
“ as they are judged by Jupiter himself.”

ESSAY 45.

ON GENEROSITY.

(McImoth.)

I CONSIDER a generous mind as the noblest work of the creation ; and am persuaded wherever it resides, no real merit can be wanting. It is, perhaps, the most singular of all the moral endowments : I am sure at least, it is often imputed where it cannot justly be claimed. The meanest self-love, under some refined disguise, frequently passes upon common observers for this godlike principle, and I have known many a popular action attributed to this motive, where it flowed from a no higher source than the suggestions of concealed vanity. Good-nature, as it has many features in common with this virtue, is usually mistaken for it : the former, however, is but the effect possibly of a happy disposition of the animal structure, or as Dryden somewhere calls it, of a certain "milkiness of blood ;"

whereas the latter is seated in the mind, and can never subsist where good sense and enlarged sentiments have no existence. It is entirely founded, indeed, upon justness of thought; which is perhaps the reason this virtue is so little the characteristic of mankind in general. A man whose mind is warped by the selfish passions, or contracted by the narrow prejudices of sects or parties, must undoubtedly want understanding. The same clouds that darken his intellectual views obstruct his moral ones; and his generosity is extremely circumscribed, because his reason is exceedingly limited.

It is the distinguishing pre-eminence of the Christian system, that it cherishes this elevated principle in one of its noblest exertions. Forgiveness of injuries, I confess, indeed, has been inculcated by several of the Heathen moralists, but it never entered into the established ordinances of any religion, till it had the sanction of the Great Author of ours. I have often, however, wondered that the ancients, who raised so many virtues and affections of the mind into divinities, should never have given a place in their temples to generosity; unless perhaps they included it under the notion of FIDES or HONOR. But surely, she might reasonably have claimed a separate altar and superior rites. A principle of

honour may restrain a man from counteracting the social ties, who yet has nothing of that active flame of generosity, which is too powerful to be confined within the humbler boundaries of mere negative duties. Free generosity rises above the ordinary rules of social conduct, and flows with much too full a stream to be comprehended within the precise marks of formal precepts. It is a vigorous principle in the soul, which opens and expands all her virtues beyond those which are only the forced and unnatural productions of a timid obedience. The man who is influenced singly by motives of the latter kind, aims no higher than at certain authoritative standards, without ever attempting to reach those glorious elevations, which constitute the only true heroism of the social character. Religion, without this sovereign principle, degenerates into slavish fear; and wisdom into a specious cunning; and learning is but the avarice of the mind, and wit its more pleasing kind of madness. In a word, generosity sanctifies every passion, and adds grace to every acquisition of the soul; and if it does not necessarily include, at least it reflects a lustre upon the whole circle of moral and intellectual qualities.

ESSAY 46.

ON THE LOVE OF LIFE INCREASING WITH AGE.

(*Goldsmith.*)

AGE, that lessens the enjoyment of life, increases our desire of living. Those dangers which in the vigour of youth we had learned to despise, assume new terrors as we grow old. Our caution increasing as our years increase, fear becomes at last the prevailing passion of the mind; and the small remnant of life is taken up in useless efforts to keep off our end, or to provide for a continued existence.

Strange contradiction in our nature, and to which even the wise are liable! If I should judge of that part of life which lies before me, by that which I have already seen, the prospect is hideous. Experience tells me that my past enjoyments have brought no real felicity, and sensation assures me, that those I have felt are

stronger than those which are yet to come. Yet experience and sensation in vain persuade: hope, more powerful than either, dresses out the distant prospect in fancied beauty, some happiness in perspective still beckons me to pursue, and like a losing gamester, every new disappointment increases my ardour to continue the game.

Whence this increased love of life, which grows upon us with our years; whence comes it that we thus make greater efforts to preserve our existence, at a period when it becomes scarcely worth the keeping? Is it that nature, attentive to the preservation of mankind, increases our wishes to live, while she lessens our enjoyments; and as she robs the senses of every pleasure, equips imagination with the spoil? Life would be insupportable to an old man, who loaded with infirmities, feared death no more than when in the vigour of manhood; the numberless calamities of decaying nature, and the consciousness of surviving every pleasure, would at once induce him with his own hand to terminate the scene of misery; but happily the contempt of death forsakes him at a time when it could be only prejudicial; and life acquires an imaginary value, in proportion as its real value is no more.

Our attachment to every object around us increases in general from the length of our ac-

quaintance with it. I would not chuse, says a French philosopher, to see an old post pulled up with which I had been long acquainted. A mind long habituated to a certain set of objects insensibly becomes fond of seeing them, visits them from habit, and parts from them with reluctance; hence proceeds the avarice of the old in every kind of possession. They love the world and all that it produces; they love life and all its advantages, not because it gives them pleasure, but because they have known it long.

Chinvang the Chaste, ascending the throne of China, commanded that all who were unjustly detained in prison, during the preceding reigns, should be set free. Among the number who came to thank their deliverer on this occasion, there appeared a majestic old man, who throwing himself at the emperor's feet, addressed him as follows, "Great father of China! behold a wretch, "now eighty-five years old, who was shut up in "a dungeon at the age of twenty-two. I was "imprisoned, though a stranger to my crime, or "without being even confronted by my accusers. "I have now lived in solitude and darkness for "more than fifty years, and am grown familiar "with distress. As yet dazzled with the splendour of that sun to which you have restored "me, I have been wandering about the streets

“to find some friend that would assist, or relieve, or remember me; but my friends, my family and relations, are all dead, and I am forgotten. Permit me then, oh Chinwang, to wear out the wretched remains of life in my former prison. The walls of my dungeon are to me more pleasing than the most splendid palace; I have not long to live, and shall be unhappy except I spend the rest of my days where my youth was passed, in that prison from which you were pleased to release me.”

The old man's passion for confinement is similar to that we all have for life. We are habituated to the prison, we look round with discontent, are displeased with the abode, and yet the length of our captivity only increases our fondness for the cell. The trees we have planted, the houses we have built, or the posterity we have begotten, all serve to bind us closer to earth, and embitter our parting. Life suits the young like a new acquaintance; the companion is yet unexhausted, is at once instructive and amusing, its company pleases, yet for all that it is little regarded. To us who are declined in years, life appears like an old friend; its jests have been anticipated in former conversations, it has no new story to make us smile, no new improvement with which to surprise, yet still we

love it; destitute of every enjoyment still we love it; husband the wasting treasure with increased frugality, and feel all the poignancy of anguish in the fatal separation.

Sir Philip Mordaunt was young, beautiful, sincere, brave, an Englishman. He had a complete fortune of his own, and the love of the king his master, which was equivalent to riches. Life opened all her treasure before him, and promised a long succession of future happiness. He came, tasted of the entertainment, but was disgusted even in the beginning. He professed an aversion to living, was tired of walking round the same circle, had tried every enjoyment, and found them all grow weaker at every repetition. "If life and youth be so displeasing," cried he to himself, "what will it appear when age comes on; if it be at present indifferent, sure it will then be execrable." This thought embittered every reflection, till at last with all the serenity of perverted reason, he ended the dispute with a pistol! Had this self-deluded man been apprised, that existence grows more desirable to us the longer we exist, he would then have faced old age without shrinking, he would have boldly dared to live, and served that society by his future assiduity which he basely injured by his desertion.

ESSAY 47.

PRACTICE AND HABITS.

(Locke.)

WE are born with faculties and powers capable of almost any thing, such at least as would carry us further than can easily be imagined; but it is only the exercise of those powers which gives us ability and skill in any thing, and leads us towards perfection.

A middle aged ploughman will scarcely ever be brought to the carriage and language of a gentleman, though his body be as well proportioned, his joints as supple, and his natural parts not any way inferior. The legs of a dancing master and the fingers of a musician, fall as it were naturally, without thought or pains, into regular and admirable motions. Bid them change their parts, and they will in vain endeavour to produce like motions in the members not used to them, and it will require length of time and

long practice to attain but some degrees of a like ability. What incredible and astonishing actions do we find rope dancers and tumblers bring their bodies to. All these admired motions, beyond the reach and almost the conception of unpractised spectators, are nothing but the mere effects of use and industry in men, whose bodies have nothing peculiar in them from those of the amazed lookers on.

As it is in the body, so it is in the mind, practice makes it what it is; and most of those excellencies, which are looked upon as natural endowments, will be found, when examined more narrowly, to be the production of exercise, and to be raised to that pitch only by repeated actions. Some men are remarkable for pleasantness in raillery; others for apologues, and apposite diverting stories. This is apt to be taken for the effect of pure nature; and that the rather, because it is not got by rules; and those who excel in either of them never purposely set themselves to the study of it as an art to be learnt. But yet it is true, that at first some lucky hit which took with somebody and gained him commendation, encouraged him to try again, inclined his thoughts and endeavours that way, till at last he insensibly got a facility without perceiving how; and that is attributed wholly to nature,

which was much more the effect of use and practice.

I do not deny that natural disposition may often give the first rise to it, but that never carries us far without use and exercise, and it is practice alone that brings the powers of the mind as well as those of the body to their perfection. Many a good poetic vien is buried under a trade, and never produces any thing for want of improvement. The ways of discourse and reasoning are very different even concerning the same matter, at court and in the university. And he that will go but from Westminster-hall to the exchange, will find a different genius and turn in their ways of talking; and yet we cannot think, that all whose lot fell in the city, were born with different parts from those who were bred at the university, or inns of court.

To what purpose all this, but to shew that the difference so observable in men's understandings, and parts, does not arise so much from their natural faculties, as acquired habits. He would be laughed at, that should attempt to make a fine dancer out of a country hedger, at past fifty. And he will not have much better success, who will endeavour at that age, to make a man reason well, or speak handsomely, that has not been used to it, though you should

lay before him a collection of all the best precepts of logic or oratory. No body excels by hearing rules, or laying them up in his memory; practice must settle the habit of doing without reflecting on the rule. And you may as well hope to make a good painter or musician extempore, by a lecture and instruction in the arts of music and painting, as a coherent thinker, or strict reasoner by a set of rules, shewing him wherein right reasoning consists.

As therefore defects and weakness in men's understandings, as well as other faculties, are derived from want of a right use of their own minds, I am apt to think the fault is generally mislaid upon nature, and there is often a complaint of the want of parts, when the fault lies in want of a due improvement upon them. We see men frequently dextrous and sharp enough in making a bargain, who, if you reason with them about matters of religion, appear perfectly stupid.

Though the faculties of the mind are improved by exercise, yet they must not be put to a stress beyond their strength. *Quid valeant humeris quid ferre recusant*, must be made the measure of every ones understanding who has à desire not only to perform well, but to keep up the vigour of his faculties, and not to baulk his understanding by what is too hard for it. The mind,

by being engaged in a task beyond its strength, like the body, strained by lifting at a weight too heavy, has often its force broken, and thereby gets an unaptness or an aversion to any vigorous attempt ever after.

A sinew cracked seldom recovers its former strength, or at least the tenderness of the strain remains a long while, and the memory of it longer, and leaves a lasting caution in the man, not to put the part quickly again to any robust employment. So it fares with the mind, once jaded by an attempt above its power; it is either disabled for the future, or else checks at any vigorous undertaking ever after, at least is very hardly brought to exert its force again on any subject that requires thought and meditation. The understanding should be brought to the difficult and knotty parts of knowledge, that try the strength of thought, and a full bent of the mind, by insensible degrees; and in such a gradual proceeding nothing is too difficult.

Nor let it be objected, that such a slow progress will never reach the extent of some sciences. It is not to be imagined how far constancy will carry us; however it is better to walk slowly in a rugged way, than to break a leg and be a cripple. He that begins with the calf may carry the ox; but he that will at first take up an ox,

may so disable himself, as not to be able to lift a calf after. When the mind by insensible degrees, has brought itself to attention and close thinking, it will be able to cope with difficulties, and master them without any prejudice to itself, and then it may go on roundly. Every abstruse problem, every intricate question will not baffle, discourage, or break it.

But though putting the mind unprepared upon an unusual stress, that may discourage or damp it for the future, ought to be avoided; yet this must not run it, by an over great shyness of difficulties, into a lazy sauntering, about ordinary and obvious things, that demand no thought nor application. This debases and enervates the understanding, makes it weak and unfit for labour. This is a sort of hovering about the surface of things, without any insight into them, or penetration; and when the mind has been once habituated to this lazy recumbency and satisfaction, on the obvious surface of things, it is in danger to rest satisfied there, and go no deeper, since it cannot do it without pains and digging.

He that has for some time accustomed himself to take up what easily offers itself at first view, has reason to fear he shall never reconcile

himself to the fatigue of turning and tumbling things in his mind to discover their more retired and more valuable secrets.

ESSAY 48.

THE DANGER OF PROCRASTINATION.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

(Cowley.)

I AM glad you approve and applaud my design of withdrawing myself from all tumult and business of the world; and consecrating the little rest of my time to those studies, to which nature had so motherly inclined me, and from which fortune, like a step-mother, has so long detained me. But nevertheless, you say, you would advise me not to precipitate that resolution; but to stay awhile longer with patience and complaisance, till I had gotten such an estate as might afford me, according to the saying of that person, whom you and I love very much,

and would believe as soon as another man, *cum dignitate otium**. This were excellent advice to Joshua, who could bid the Sun stay too. But there is no fooling with life, when it is once turned beyond forty. The seeking for a fortune then, is but a desperate after-game; it is a hundred to one, if a man fling two sixes, and recover all, especially if his hand be no luckier than mine.

There is some help for all the defects of fortune; for if a man cannot attain to the length of his wishes, he may have his remedy by cutting them shorter. Epicurus writes a letter to Idomeneus (who was then a very powerful, wealthy, and it seems bountiful person) to recommend to him, who had made so many men rich, one Pythocles, a friend of his, whom he desired might be made a rich man too; "I intreat you," he continues, "that you would not do it just the same way as you have done to many less deserving persons, but in the most gentlemanly manner of obliging him, which is not to add any thing to his estate, but to take something from his desires."

The sum of this is, that for the uncertain hopes of some conveniencies, we ought not to defer

* Ease with dignity.

the execution of a work that is necessary; especially when the use of those things, which we would stay for, may otherwise be supplied; but the loss of time never recovered: nay, further yet, though we were sure to obtain all that we had a mind to, though we were sure of getting never so much by continuing the game; yet, when the light of life is so near going out, and ought to be so precious, "*le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle.*"

After having been long lost in a tempest, if our masts be standing, and we have still sails and tackling enough to carry us to our port, it is no matter if we want the streamers and top-gallants.

Utere velis, totos pande sinus.

Make use of all your sails.

A gentleman in our late civil wars, when his quarters were beaten up by the enemy, was taken prisoner, and lost his life afterwards, only by staying to put on a band and adjust his perriwig: he would escape like a person of quality or not at all, and died the noble martyr of ceremony and gentility. I think your counsel of "*Festina lente,*" is as ill to a man who is flying from the world, as it would have been to that unfortunate well-bred gentleman, who was so cautious as not to fly indecently from his ene-

mies; and therefore I prefer Horace's advice to yours,

——Sapere aude

Incipe——

Begin; the getting out of doors is the greatest part of the journey; according to the Latin proverb preserved by Varro, "*portam itineri longissimam esse.*" But to return to Horace;

Sapere aude,

Incipe, vivendi qui recte prorogat horam
Rusticus expectat dum labitur amnis, at ille
Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

Ep. ii. 40.

Begin, be bold, and venture to be wise;
He who defers this work from day to day,
Does on a river's bank expecting stay;
Till the whole stream, which stopt him, should be gone,
That runs, and as it runs, for ever will run on."

Cæsar, the man of expedition above all others, was so free from this folly, that whensoever in a journey he was to cross any river, he never went one foot out of his way for a bridge, or a ford, or a ferry; but threw himself into it immediately, and swam over; and this is the course we ought to imitate, if we meet with any stops in our way to happiness. Stay till the waters are low; stay till some boats come to transport you; stay till a bridge be built for you; you had even as good stay till the river be quite past.

Persius has an odd expression of these procrastinators, which methinks is full of fancy.

*Jam cras hesternum consumpsimus, ecce aliud eras
Egerit hos annos.*

Sat. V. 68.

Our yesterday's to-morrow now is gone,
And still a new to-morrow does come on;
We by to-morrow draw up all our store,
Till the exhausted well can yield no more.

And now, I think, I am even with you for your "Otium cum dignitate," and "Festina lente," and three or four more of your new Latin sentences: if I should draw upon all my forces out of Seneca and Plutarch upon this subject, I should overwhelm you, but I leave those as *Triarii** for your next charge. I shall only give you now a light skirmish out of an epigrammatist, your special good friend.

MARTIALIS, LIB. 5. EP. 10.

"Cras te victurum, cras dicis, Postume, semper;
"Dic mihi cras istud, Postume, quando venit?"

* That is, the last and chief defence. The allusion is to the order of the Roman armies, in which the *Triarii*, as they were called, served in the rear, and being their best and most tried soldiers, were reserved to sustain the action, when the other ranks were defeated or hard pressed, and the success became doubtful. This explanation may not be unacceptable to some readers.—Hurd.

"Quam longè cras istud? ubi est? aut unde petendum?

"Numquid apud Parthos, Armeniòsque latet?

"Jam cras istud habet Priami vel Nestoris annos.

"Cras istud quanti, dic mihi, possit emi?

"Cras vives: hodie jam vivere, Postume, serum est.

"Ille sapit, quisquis, Postume, vixit heri."

To morrow you will live, you always cry;

In what far country does this morrow lye,

That 'tis so mighty long ere it arrive?

Beyond the Indies does this morrow live?

'Tis so far fetch'd this morrow, that I fear

'Twill be both very old and very dear.

To morrow I will live, the fool does say;

To day itself's too late; the wise liv'd yesterday.

MARTIAL, LIB. 2. EPIG. 16.

"Quintiliane, vagæ moderator summe juventæ,

"Gloria Romanæ, Quintiliane, togæ;

"Vivere quòd propero pauper, nec inutilis annis,

"Da veniam; properat vivere nemo satis.

"Differat hoc, patrios optat qui vincere census,

"Atriæque immodicis arctat imaginibus.

"Me focus, et nigros non indignantia fumos

"Tecta juvant, et fons vivus, et herba rudis.

"Sit mihi verna satur; sit non doctissima conjux;

"Sit nox cum somno; sit sine lite dies."

Wonder not, sir, (you who instruct the town

In the true wisdom of the sacred gown)

That I make haste to live, and cannot hold

Patiently out, till I am rich and old.

Life for delays and doubts no time does give,

None ever yet made haste enough to live.

Let him defer it whose preposterous care

Omits himself, and reaches to his heir.

“ Who does his father's bounded stores despise,
“ And whom his own too never can suffice.
“ My humble thoughts no glittering roofs require,
“ Or rooms, that shine with aught but constant fire.
“ I well content the avarice of my sight
“ With the fair gildings of reflected light :
“ Pleasures abroad, the sport of nature yields,
“ Her living fountains, and her smiling fields ;
“ And then at home, what pleasure is't to see
“ A little, cleanly, chearful family ?
“ Which if a chaste wife crown, no less in her
“ Than fortune, I the golden mean prefer.
“ Too noble, nor too wise, she should not be ;
“ No, nor too rich, too fair, too fond of me.
“ Thus let my life slide silently away
“ With sleep all night, and quiet all the day.”

ESSAY 49.

ESSAY WRITING.

(Sir Richard Blackmore.)

AN Essay is an instructive writing, either in prose or verse, distinguished from complete treatises and voluminous works, by its shorter extent and less accurate method. It is natural to desire the acquisition of knowledge by the most easy and expeditious ways, and therefore few persons have been so patient of labour and application as to be delighted with prolix compositions; in which the main design of the author being long suspended, the discourse grows so tedious to many, that they imagine it will never be finished. But the disrelish of such diffusive pieces in these times is more universal, and carried so far that great books are looked upon as oppressive, and by their bulk concluded to be dull and spiritless; while those in which the principal end as well as the sentiments of the author, are con-

tracted into a narrower compass, if well written, meet with general approbation. And if it happens that a large volume is well received in the present age, it must be adorned with variety of matter, as well as pure diction, and wrought up to a great degree of perfection; otherwise the reader is discouraged, and throws it away as too painful a task to be undertaken.

Since discourses contracted into a narrow room, if they are written with strength and perspicuity, and contain variety of good sense, are more acceptable to readers, by not putting them to too much labour and attention, it must for that reason be acknowledged, that their usefulness is more diffusive, than that of long and elaborate volumes; and though they do not exhibit truth in such a clear and perfect scheme, nor set it in so full a light, as it appears in a large and methodical system, they are however, very beneficial, and promote the interest of literature and virtue. And since most men take greater delight in this manner of writing, than in prolix and unwieldy productions, whose enormous size puts them in a fright; to gratify the general taste, as well as to avoid all affectation of the air of the schools, and ostentation of learning, many authors have applied themselves



